

# JAMMU AND KASHMIR


SOMNATH DHAR







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JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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*India—the Land and the People*

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SOMNATH DHAR



NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

*Cover:* The breathtakingly beautiful Dal lake is flanked by Mughal gardens and has houseboats and *shikaras* plying on its waters.

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## Foreword

A book on Jammu and Kashmir state, covering a wide ground, ranging from ancient history to cultural heritage, arts and folklore, is always welcome. Harving already run into two editions —1977 and 1991—and now being printed for the third time displays the popularity of the subject as well as the engaging style in which it has been written by Prof. Somnath Dhar. He has to his credit eleven books on Kashmir, besides this volume which has appeared under *India—the Land and the People* series of the National Book Trust. This book should continue to appeal to all those interested in the Elysian Vale, the fabled Jammu region and the mysterious land of Ladakh. I appreciate the hard, sustained work that has gone into this volume in updating the facts and figures, as far as possible.

I have great pleasure in writing a foreword to this revised edition, and commend it to interested readers as well as visitors to Kashmir.

J & K  
September 1998

FAROOQ ABDULLAH  
Chief Minister

# Foreword

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I am grateful to the Public Relations Department of the Jammu and Kashmir government, particularly its officer, Jawaharlal Kaul, for providing current information on the state. My gratitude is no less to my friend and neighbour, Manohar Trakru, who as the special correspondent, All India Radio, travelled extensively with three prime ministers and provided me a mine of information on developmental activities of the state. Inspiration for writing on Kashmir also came from Dr Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister of the state. Appreciating my previous work on Kashmir, he wrote to me in January 1988, saying, "Please keep your interest in Kashmir unabated." Earlier in 1983, he contributed a becoming foreword to my book, *Historical Tales of Kashmir* (Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 1983).

I thank Dr T.N. Madan, one of my students at S.P. College, Srinagar and a luminary of the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, and also many other organisations, who had suggested this project to me. And, I am ever beholden to my uncle, late Pandit Gobindji Bhan, in whose well-equipped library at Srinagar I acquired a love for reading and writing. His son, Dr Brij Mohan Bhan, has kept me informed on the latest happenings—political and social—in the state. Last but not the least, I would like to add that but for the sustained help and guidance from Asha, my wife, this revised manuscript would not have been completed in time.

# MAP OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR



Based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of India.  
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## THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

One of the largest states of the Indian Union, Jammu and Kashmir covers an area of 2,22,236 sq km. This, however, includes 78,114 sq km under illegal occupation of Pakistan, 5,180 sq km handed over by Pakistan to China and 37,555 sq km under occupation of China.

The state lies between 32° 17' to 36° 58' North latitude and 73° 26' to 80° 30' East longitude. From north to south it extends over 640 km and from east to west, 480 km. It occupies the north-west niche of India, bounded on the south by Himachal Pradesh and the Punjab, on the south-west and west by Pakistan, on the north by Chinese Turkistan and a little of Russian Turkistan, and on the east by Chinese Tibet—thus strategically bordering the territories of three countries—Russia, China and Pakistan.

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*Area:* 2,22,236\* sq km

*Capital:* Srinagar (summer).  
Jammu (winter)

*Population:* 77,18,700\*\*

*Principal Languages:* Urdu, Kashmiri, Dogri, Pahari, Balti, Ladakhi, Punjabi, Gujarati and Dadri

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### Population

The population of the state, according to the 1981 Census

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\* Includes 78,114 sq km under illegal occupation of Pakistan, 5,180 sq km illegally handed over by Pakistan to China and 37,555 sq km under illegal occupation of China.

\*\* The population figure excludes population of areas under unlawful occupation of Pakistan and China where Census could not be taken.

was 59,87,389 (31,64,660 males and 28,22,729 females)—the figure excludes the areas under the occupation of Pakistan and China.

According to the projections made by the Standing Committee of Experts on Population Projections, October 1989, the population of the state was 77,18,700. The 1991 Census could not be held due to disturbances in the state. The population must have gone up despite the radical changes that the state has undergone in the past decade. Since Jammu and Ladakh form an integral part of the state there was no point in conducting the Census only there. The density of population as given by this Committee is 76 persons per sq km. The decennial population growth rate for 1981-91 was given as 28.92 per cent as against 29.69 per cent for the period 1971-81.

The population of the state by rural-urban residence in 1901-1991 is reported to be as follows:

Population of the State by Rural-Urban Residence, 1901-1991

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
1901	2139362	1980614	158748
1911	2292535	2024017	268518
1921	2424359	2156605	267754
1931	2670208	2352403	317805
1941	2946728	2560163	386565
1951	3253852	2796639	457213
1961	3560976	2967661	593315
1971	4616632	3758411	858221
1981	5987389	4726986	1260403
1991	7718700	5879300	1839400

The Kashmir Valley is predominantly Muslim and the small minority of Kashmiri Pandits in Srinagar and some other towns and villages of the Valley were driven out by the militants or they left out of fear and intimidation. Many of them are living as refugees in camps in the city of Jammu and in Delhi but efforts are being made to make them return to their homes in the Valley. The regionwise



break-up of the population as per the 1981 Census showed that the Muslims constituted the predominant religious community of the state at 64.19 per cent, Hindus came next at 32.24 per cent, Sikhs 2.23 per cent, Buddhists 1.16 per cent, Christian 0.14 per cent and others.

The areawise break-up of the estimated population in 1991 is given as follows:

Area, Population and Headquarters of Districts

<i>District</i>	<i>Area (sq km)</i>	<i>Population (estimated)</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
Anantnag	3,984	8,26,291	Anantnag
Badgam	1,371	4,97,346	Badgam
Baramulla	4,588	8,61,214	Baramulla
Doda	11,691	5,25,326	Doda
Jammu	3,097	12,07,996	Jammu
Kargil	14,036	81,067	Kargil
Kathua	2,651	4,92,288	Kathua
Kupwara	2,379	4,10,404	Kupwara
Leh	82,665*	89,974	Leh
Pulwama	1,398	5,16,441	Pulwama
Poonch	1,674	2,92,207	Poonch
Rajauri	2,630	4,17,333	Rajauri
Srinagar	2,228	8,92,506	Srinagar
Udhampur	4,550	6,02,807	Udhampur

\* Includes 37,555 sq km under illegal occupation of China.

The state comprises mostly mountainous terrain rising in several tiers from the plains in the south to the high altitude valleys—average altitude, 1,800 m above sea level—whose mountains rise up to 5,000 m and over. In Ladakh and Kargil, there are some of the loftiest inhabited villages and towns in the world.

Geographically, the Jammu and Kashmir state is divided into four zones. First, the mountainous and semi-mountainous plain commonly known as Kandi belt, the second, hills including Shiwalik ranges, the third, mountains of Kashmir Valley and Pir Panjal range and the fourth is Tibetan tract of Ladakh and Kargil. Jammu and Kashmir shares international boundaries with Pakistan in the west, China in the north and Tibet in the west.

## Kashmir Valley

The Valley of Kashmir is a unique oval plain, approximately 134 km in length and 32 to 40 km in breadth, at an average height of 1,800 m above the sea level, and nestled securely among the Pir Panjal range of the Himalayas. Nowhere else in the world can one find such an amphitheatre of snow-capped mountains, surrounding such a large plain, traversed throughout its length by a navigable river, the Jhelum.

The mountains which surround the Valley are varied in form, height and colour. To the east stands hoary-headed Harmukh (5,150 m), the formidable mountain guarding the valley of the Sindh. Further south is Mahadev and the lofty ranges of Gwasha Brari (5,425 m). The peak of Amarnath (5,280 m) also lies in this area. On the south-west is the Pir Panjal range with peaks 4,500 m high and to the north are ranges of the Karakorams and the Himalayas, dominated by the majestic Nanga Parbat (7,980 m), also called by the poetic name of *Diyamir*. Covered with snow all the year round and rising glistening white, it is the fifth highest mountain in the world. Latitudewise, Kashmir corresponds to Damascus in Syria, Fez in Morocco and South Carolina in the USA.

The legend that the Kashmir Valley was a vast lake, Satisar, in prehistoric times, corresponds with the results of geological observations. The sandstone rock at the western corner of the basin was most probably rent by volcanic action. The lake was drained by the deepening of the Baramulla gorge—the result of the slow process of erosion spread over geological years. Tradition has it that the drainer of the lake was Kashyap, after whom the Valley was called *Kashyap-mar*, which, with the passage of time, became Kashmir. According to an interpretation, Kashmir is a Prakrit compound with its components *kas* meaning 'a channel' and *mir*, 'a mountain'—the compound word adding to a 'a rock trough'. In the *Puranas*, Kashmir is called *gerek* (hill) because of its overwhelming hilly features. The



word Kashmir has been shortened by Kashmiris into *Kashir*. The Kashmiri calls his language *Koshur* or *Kashur*.

The shape of the Valley is that of an elliptical saucer. The floor of the vast Valley is built of small consolidated lake beds and alluvial soils. Numerous plateaus, locally known as *karewas*, stand up isolated in the middle of the Valley. The green cultivated fields of these terraces contrast sharply with the bleak mountains.

Kashmir is a land of lakes and rivers. The deep and clear waters of the lakes reflect the high peaks of snow-capped mountains. The river Jhelum (ancient name, *Vitasta*—transformed into *Veth*, in Kashmiri parlance) meanders through the Valley in artistic zigzags, which have furnished the motifs to the deft Kashmiri artisans. Nestled among hills in the north-east of the Valley is the Wular (20 km by 8 km), the largest fresh-water lake in India. The Dal lake, well-known for the Mughal gardens flanking it, in the vicinity of Srinagar, is about 6 km long and about 2 km broad. Other well-known lakes are the Manasbal (the deepest in Kashmir), the Kaunsar Nag (3,901.44 m) and the Gangabal and other mountain tarns, at an elevation of over 3,300 m. In the Lidder valley, there are huge glaciers like Kolahai which is about 8 km long and comes down as low as 3,300 m. The mountains and lakes are complemented by luxuriant orchards dotted with majestic *chinar* trees, providing so many breathtaking spectacles. No wonder, the French physician, Dr Francois Bernier, wrote in the mid-seventeenth century, about the Vale: "In truth, the land surpassed in beauty all that my warmest imagination had anticipated, and it is probably unequalled by any country of the same extent."

The Kashmir Valley enjoys an enchanting climate for the major part of the year. A unique feature of the climate is the four clear-cut seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter. Till the end of May, the climate of Kashmir is comparable with that of Switzerland. In spring, the Valley wears blankets of emerald green grass and is decked with

flowers of various hues and fresh leaves—a phenomenon of rejuvenation from the rigours of a long winter. It is then the world's most wonderful of natural gardens. In summer, the sleepy blue mountains with snow-capped peaks, clear streams, cool bubbling springs, noisy torrents, beautiful lakes, shady *chinar* groves, silvery poplars, drooping willows and pine forests make Kashmir the 'playground of Asia'. In autumn, the trees and forests turn into bronze and copper colours, and the foliage becomes a riot of golden yellow and green. A walk over fallen *chinar* leaves makes a rustling, musical sound. In winter, the giant-size trees wear a bare look when the landscape dons a mantle of snow.

Srinagar (the city of Saraswati—the goddess of learning) is an ancient city. Founded by Asoka (272-232 B.C.), it was then called *Pravarapura*, after King Pravarsena. Srinagar was a great seat of learning in those days, throbbing with life and bristling with commerce. It was also called *Shrinagri*—the city of wealth and beauty. Situated in the centre of the Valley, Srinagar, the summer capital of the state, is the most populous city, covering an area of about 28.5 sq km. The river Jhelum, flanked by the Dal lake and intersected by canals, runs through the city and lends an idyllic charm to it. Hence, the city has been called the 'Venice of the East'.

Anantnag (also called Islamabad) is another ancient town of Kashmir, about 64 km to the north of Srinagar. It is an exotic town full of springs, and streams run in every other compound. Some of these are sulphurous springs which have curative qualities.

Other major towns are Baramulla and Sopore, both situated on the Jhelum after the river enters the Wular lake and emerges from it. It is at Baramulla that the Jhelum after running a calm and navigable course of 166 km in the Valley escapes in turbulent torrents over mountain gorges.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Jammu and Kashmir economy. Nearly 82 per cent of the state's population living in rural areas is dependent on agriculture and allied



activities. About 37 per cent income of the Jammu and Kashmir state is from the agriculture sector.

Being hilly terrain, complex machinery cannot be deployed in agriculture operations. The agricultural holdings are small and most areas sow a single crop. The state has registered an impressive advance in the agriculture sector, specially in recent years. About 7,24,000 hectares of land are under cultivation and more areas are being brought under the high-yielding variety crops.

Rice, wheat, barley, *bajra* and *jowar* and various fruits are grown here. With improvement in irrigation, suitable crop rotation, use of fertilisers and machinery, there is a possibility of increasing the cultivable land and raising greater agricultural yields. Raising livestock is another source of income to the farmers. New breeds have been introduced to improve the quality and strength of the livestock.

### Jammu Province

The strip of level land at the northernmost extremity of the plains of the Punjab which touches the low ridges of the hills and spreads over a large tract, constitutes what is called the 'region of the outer hills'. Varying in height from 600 m to 1,200 m above the sea level, these rugged hills run parallel to one another, enclosing small, narrow valleys.

The province of Jammu lies between the 'outer hills' region bounding the Valley of Kashmir in the south, and the hilly tract extending to the plains of the Punjab. The river Ravi flows in the east of this region and the river Jhelum in the west. The Chenab issues forth from the mountains into the plains near the town of Akhnur and flows through the Jammu district before entering the plains of the Punjab (now in Pakistan).

The 'outer hills' region consists of Udhampur, Ramnagar and Rampur. The rugged hills give way in the north and north-east to the outer hills of the Shiwaliks, 1,200 m to 3,600 m above the sea level. There is a continuous rise in elevation to what are conveniently called the 'middle

hills' or the middle Himalayas. Small narrow valleys give way to deep gorges and picturesque valleys largely formed due to the denudation wrought by the fast-flowing rivers over thousands of geological years. In this region lie the districts of Batote, Bhadarwah, Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban.

Jammu city, the winter capital of the state, stands on one of the spurs of a rugged hill overlooking the plains and the river Tawi. The city is about 300 m above the sea level and about 4 km wide. According to the 1981 Census, the city had a population of 2,06,135 which in 1991 became 12,07,996. The prominent features of the city are its temples, whose pointed spires can be seen from afar. Other towns in this plain, and to the east of the Chenab are Basoli, Ramkot, Ramnagar and Samba and to the west of the Chenab, Akhnur and Bhimber.

The Jammu district occupies an area of 26,089.4 sq km. The area abounds in beautiful natural scenery. The relief features of the province provide interesting climatic as well as floral phenomena. There is a sort of wind divide starting from Poonch and extending to the southern edge of the Pir Panjal. The area has summer precipitation. As in the plains, the south-west monsoons cause rain in the 'outer plains' area and the 'outer hills' region, though not with the same intensity. As the altitude rises towards the 'middle mountains' area of Batote, Bhadarwah, Kishtwar, Padar and Banihal, the summer rainfall averages 45 inches (113 cm). Riasi and Poonch get more than 60 inches (150 cm) of rainfall annually. The 'outer plains' areas of Ramnagar, Ramkot, Samba, Basoli, Akhnur and Bhimber experience the extremes of tropical heat. The average annual rainfall in Jammu district is nearly 45 inches (113 cm). The hot season lasts from April to June, followed by the rainy season from July to September. The intensity of the heat in summer is comparable to that of the plains of the rest of India. Winter lasts from October to March.

There is a luxurious growth of vegetation all over the 'outer hill' and the 'middle mountain' areas which is mostly



of tropical variety. The upper reaches of the mountains are thickly covered with coniferous forests. The lower regions have forests of silver fir, deodar, spruce, oak and pine. The best varieties of pine and deodar are found in the dense forests of Kishtwar and Bhadarwah. The 'plains area' abounds in cactus varieties of bushes and trees.

The main crops in the Jammu valley are maize, rice, millet, barley and wheat. Irrigation facilities have been extended to bolster cultivation, especially of rice and wheat. Maize, wheat, barley and cotton grow extensively on the hillsides.

Jammu province is rich in minerals. Coal, bauxite, copper, zinc and lead are abundant. Sapphire mines are located at higher elevations in the Papar valley. Semi-precious stones like beryl and aquamarine crystals like quartz and felspar are also found in the region. Riasi has coal, gem stones, gypsum, clay, copper, bauxite and iron ore.

Though little known, the tableland of Kishtwar is flanked by the high and steep mountains of the 'middle mountains' region, the highest point being 4,089 km above sea level. It has an area of 7,311 sq km. Its extensive, unbroken and awe-inspiring hills can be monotonous and oppressive, but the dark fir-covered hills and heavily forested mountains break the monotony, providing unique scenery. Kishtwar is famous for mines of sapphire and rubies. The climate is pleasant and bracing in summer and cold in winter.

Kishtwar and Bhadarwah, with heavily forested mountains, are rich in pine, fir and deodar. The best varieties of pine and deodar are found in this area. The forests of the area are regular haunts of hunters. They can hunt panthers, black and red bear, wild goat, ibex, musk deer, wolf, fox, *barasingha*, pig, Himalayan chamois, leopard, etc. In the river beds, swamps and low forests, a variety of winged game—duck, goose, *chakor*, monal pheasant, partridge and snipe—are found in preserves for sportsmen.

Saffron (of a brighter colour but of an inferior quality than that of the Valley) is grown here. Black cumin, medicinal herbs like *banafsha*, *kahzaban*, *dhoop*, musk, *bala*, artemesia, belladonna are aplenty in the region. Narcotic herbs are also found. Blankets and leather goods of the region are famous. The greatest handicap that prevents this region from being developed into a holiday resort lies in its remoteness and comparative inaccessibility.

### Ladakh

Beyond the Valley of Kashmir, the inner Himalayas rising in the north and east contain the frontier region of the state. The territory comprises the three geographical divisions of Ladakh, Baltistan and Dardistan. A major portion of Baltistan and the whole of Dardistan are at the moment under Pakistani occupation. Out of the total area of the state of 138,992.1 sq km the district of Ladakh (97,782 sq km) covers an area of 70.4 per cent of the total area.

The province of Ladakh touches the Chinese border on the north, merges into Tibet in the east and is contained along the south by the extension of the Great Himalayan range. The Karakoram range of mountains lies in the north of Ladakh. The second highest peak in the world, K2, crowns one of its many tall mountains. The Karakoram pass (5,517.64 m) is situated towards the north-east of Karakoram, in an area where China, Tibet and Ladakh meet. This pass facilitates a direct route from India to China.

Until some years ago, Ladakh used to be the gateway to Tibet, connecting India with Tibet and east Turkistan. As such, it was an important trade centre, besides being the meeting point of the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and Islamic cultures and traditions.

Leh, the capital (3,521 m above the sea level), is a fascinating town built on a hillside and surrounded by rocky hills. It was once the commercial nerve centre of Central Asia just as Hong Kong is of the Far East. Famous caravan routes started from Leh—in the north to Yarkand



and Kashgar, in the east to Lhasa, in the south to India and in the west to Baltistan and Kashmir Valley. Traders thronged Leh from Turkey, Arab countries, Iran and Afghanistan. That hustle and bustle has since been reduced due to tensions with Pakistan and China, and the trade routes blocked. Leh town is full of orchards, groves, gardens and monasteries and is crowded with people. Poplars and willows are aplenty. Apples, apricots and giant-size melons are grown in these orchards.

Ladakh is a mountainous terrain between the Himalayas and the Kuenlum mountains. It comprises the biggest district of Jammu and Kashmir state, with an area of 97,782 sq km. One of the highest habitations in the world, Ladakh has an elevation ranging between 2,400 m and 4,500 m above the sea level. The average height of its mountains is between 5,000 and 7,000 m. The barren mountain ranges stretch through the area from south-east to north-west. Its valleys, about 500 sq km in area, lie along the headwaters of the Indus, the Sulej and the Chenab rivers. The mighty river Indus, having originated hundreds of kilometres further east from near the Kailash mountain and the Mansarovar lake in Tibet, flows in an almost straight line from the north-west to the south-east of Ladakh. The river enters the region of Skardu in Baltistan. The gigantic barren mountains, devoid of any vegetation, offer an endless variety in landscape, breathtaking phenomena of colours and variegated moods of nature, topped by an aura more exotic than any of the picturesque sights of Kashmir. Glaciers and the snow-capped mountains encircling the crystal-clear lakes enhance this rugged beauty further.

Geological research has established that when the Indian sub-continent moved northwards some 45 million years ago, it happened to collide with the underside of Asia. That colliding line is the Indus suture, near the town of Puga—a day's drive from Leh. The suture is of immense geological significance. An interesting spectacle in Ladakh is presented by hot springs and geysers roaring and

throwing steaming hot water upto a height of 15 m and projecting fantastic rainbow colours. These fountains of water present an interesting phenomenon in winter when the boiling water comes down in the shape of ice blocks with the impact of chilly winds, and form mounds next to the geysers.

In the north-east of Leh, at the town of Nyoma lies an unusual terrain, where the colour of the soil and rocks is purple. The awe-inspiring mountain peaks seem to touch the sky. There is a conspicuous absence of life of any form and hence it has been aptly called the 'land of the broken moon', a truly poetical name.

Over the Ladakh range and in the north of Leh is the road to Khardung La (5,600 m above the sea level), the highest road in the world—a veritable walk over thick ice-sheets, ice-walls and glaciers, with the Karakoram range in the background. Further on, Chushul, the Pangong salt-water lake, is about 112 km long. Its water is blue-green and sometimes indigo-purple.

Kargil (about 2,750 m above the sea level) has a similar network of mountains around it. The river Suru runs through the area which was rather undeveloped. Kargil, as a separate district, is developing fast now. The people of Kargil do some farming and raise sheep. Their houses are built of stone and plastered with thick layers of mud to escape the extreme rigours of the cold. They profess Islam.

The high altitude of Ladakh and Kargil and high mountains encircling the region give it a unique climate—absolute dryness (the annual rainfall is about 4 inches, i.e. 10 cm, and there is very little snow), arctic cold and extremes of weather. It is burning hot by day and piercing cold by night; very hot in summer and extremely cold in winter. The inhabitants are prone to suffer from high altitude complaints of nose bleeding, headache, and sleeplessness.

### Kashmiris

According to historians, the ancestors of Kashmiris are



early immigrants from India proper. The contacts of Kashmiris with the Rig Vedic people fructified in the Kashmiri's remarkable contribution to Sanskrit literature. With the spread of Buddhism, many scholars came to Kashmir from far-off lands for research and study of the various schools of Indian philosophy. Buddhism existed side by side with Hinduism in this golden period of Kashmir's history. The Kashmiris, during their long and chequered history, came in contact with the Roman, Greek and Persian civilisations, and the interaction made for a happy blending of cultures. The Kashmiris made remarkable contributions to story-telling, mystical poetry, the Shaiva philosophy, grammar and the sciences. Folk-songs and dances, as well as the various arts and crafts, for which Kashmir is world-famous, bear eloquent testimony to the artistic and cultural genius of the people of Kashmir.

Most of the people claim their descent from the Indo-Aryan stock. It is said that if there is any trace of pure Aryans in India, it is to be found in Kashmir. Actually, Kashmir is inhabited by diverse and different races, distinct in their looks, dress, food habits, customs, speech and traditions. Ethnic infiltration and conversion took place from time to time when hordes of invaders forced their way into the Valley, in groups, large and small, as vandals, as looters and as exploiters. The Chaks, Pathans, Mughals and Sikhs ruled Kashmir for some periods, and did their best to alter the cultural pattern of the Kashmiris but no one succeeded in changing the exclusiveness and distinct character of the people. The Kashmiris' patience, sense of sufferance and manoeuvring genius withstood all the onslaughts, absorbing some foreign elements in their own, and yet contriving to keep the basic fabric of their culture intact. The Mughal rulers came to Kashmir but theirs was a quest for exclusive enjoyment among the environs of the Valley and they left the local population generally alone.

The Kashmiris possess an individuality and character which distinguishes them wherever they go. They are

passionately fond of their 'good earth'. And, no matter to what creed they belong, they are Kashmiris to the core.

Most of the people in the Valley are fair-complexioned, with light brown hair, blue or grey eyes, chiselled features and fine physique. There are also people with a wheatish complexion, black almond eyes and black hair. Kashmiris tend to be superstitious: Their life is guided by taboos of all sorts, though modernism has since started changing the social scene. Artistic by profession, they lack art sense, rather pathetically, in their private lives.

The Kashmiris, on the whole, are non-aggressive and temperate in nature and very God-fearing. They have been regarded not only as non-martial in character but also as timid; however, this myth has been exploded by them after Independence, specially by the heroic manner in which they withstood three incursions from across the borders. Sir John Strachey who said, in his famous work *India—Its Administration and Progress*, that there are "... few greater cowards than the stalwart Muhammadans of Kashmir", would have been surprised to find how these very people defended their motherland bravely three times against savage hordes from Pakistan. Here, one may add *en passant* that the Muslims of the Valley are mostly converts, and belong to the original stock.

The non-aggressive, inborn traits, however, continue. Interesting, noisy and harmless quarrels among the less affluent classes are well known. They hurl insults at one another and bandy the most loaded abuses, pointing clenched fists at each other, but the wordy warfare never explodes into hitting each other. Though Kashmiris have a good physique, they lack good muscles. They have very keen intellect, on the whole. Kashmiris are a bundle of contradictions: vociferous, yet timid to the extent of crying in helplessness, loath to hurt yet very abusive, master artists yet lacking art sense, lowly yet intellectual and mystical, shrewd yet businesslike and persistent, emotional and ruled by sentiment, gossipy and prone to listen to



rumours, polite on the face yet abusive and rumour-mongers behind your back. With all such positive and negative elements in Kashmiri character, the Kashmiris can be singled out as extremely warm, friendly and hospitable. They tend to over-feed the guest and lavish all attention on the *dai-pocch* (God's messenger in the form of a guest).

Whereas the Kashmiri Pandit's life and habits are simple and frugal, he tends to be individualistic, with an element of self-esteem, largely intellectual. Traditionally, he avoids doing manual labour and has clung to professional and administrative jobs. In bygone days, he used to be reluctant to go away from his beautiful homeland to seek better opportunities in other parts of India. But the fast-changing times have since changed his outlook completely. There is hardly any place in the Indian Union, including the Andamans where Kashmiri Pandits have not settled. A Kashmiri Muslim, on the other hand, is generally more active, energetic and dynamic. He is an unrivalled craftsman, deftly producing time-honoured designs—intricate and beautiful—on papier-maché, wood, silver and gold, and embroiders and weaves the most exquisite shawls, carpets and rugs. He is an excellent cultivator, rears sheep and cattle and is self-employed in cottage industries. There is scarcely a thing which he cannot do. He understands profit and loss and is a shrewd businessman, often bargaining for hours till he strikes the right deal. Colonel Durand, writing towards the beginning of the present century, observed: "It will take many a long years before the Kashmiri becomes a man. Centuries of oppression has sapped his energy, taking awareness of his status out of him." If he were alive today, he would have been surprised to find that the Kashmiris are slowly but perceptibly changing under the impact of modern influences and carving a place of pride for themselves not only in their environs but also in the mainstream of the country as a whole.

Ninety per cent of the population in the Valley professes Islam, of both Sunni and Shia sects. The rest are Kashmiri

Pandits. There are some Sikhs. The Kashmiri Pandits do not have castes like Hindus in the rest of India. Dr T.N. Madan,<sup>1</sup> however, mentions two Brahmin subcastes. About the Pandits' relations with the Muslims, he says: "A Brahmin can enter the Muslim society by renouncing his religion but there is no known 'route' for the entry of a Muslim into the Brahmanic fold." More than 2.5 lakh Kashmiri Pandits are estimated to have migrated from the Valley in the wake of terrorist violence in the state. Most of them are staying in camps or on their own, mainly in Jammu and Delhi, while others have dispersed to other parts of the country and abroad.

Rice is the staple food of the Kashmiris. And, meat cooked in delicious varieties, goes with it. Kashmiris pride over *karam sag* (a kind of leafy green vegetable), *nadru* (lotus stalk) and turnips. Wherever a Kashmiri goes, he carries these precious vegetables as token presents. Kashmiris are known for their culinary art, or more accurately, the cooking of lamb dishes in various ways, each distinct in taste from the other. Mince-meat balls, cooked in milk called *goshtaba*, is one among thirty odd varieties of lamb. Among the white hues of cooked lamb, the *yekhni* dish is a general favourite, other lamb viands being *kabargah* (also cooked in milk), *roganjosh*, *rista*, etc. The tea Kashmiris drink is called *kahva*—a concoction of green tea leaves brewed in the *samovar* and enriched with pounded almonds, cardamom seeds and cinnamon stalks, overdosed with sugar and served without milk. The other kind of tea is *shirchai*—salted and milked, pink in colour, with lots of cream on top of it.

Kashmiri Muslims used to wear the *pheran*, a long loose gown, hanging down below the knees, a white turban tied on a skull cap, a close-fitting *shalwar* and laceless shoes, called *gurgabi*. A white piece of material (generally a white

<sup>1</sup> T.N. Madan: *Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir*, Asia Publishing House, 1965. (Also see Dr Madan's paper: 'Religious Ideology in a Plural Society: The Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir', *Indian Sociology*, new series, No. VI, December 1972).



shawl) hung on their shoulders like a stole. The dress looked graceful but made them rather indolent. The departure in the case of Hindu men's wear was a *churidar* pyjama instead of a *shalwar*. This ensemble was the hallmark of aristocracy in Kashmir. The less affluent Muslims wore skull caps, which looked cute and didn't carry any shawls. The old attire is giving way to modern suits though skull caps are still in use in the rural areas.

Kashmiri women are among the most beautiful in India. They compare favourably with the Iranian and Turkish beauties in appearance and complexion, but have distinctly clear-cut delicate features. They have "an English rosiness of complexion behind the Eastern tan." The colour of their hair ranges from golden red to brunette and that of eyes from green, blue, grey to black. It is but natural that they have been the object of panegyrics for their unrivalled beauty and charm. "The eyes of a beautiful Kashmiri woman have such an urgency mingled with pathos, that you look into them as you would look into spring waters, wondering! . . ." wrote James Milne<sup>2</sup>, characterising her as "a primal creature in her Garden of Eden". The smart, easy movements and alert mien of the Hanji boatwomen, sitting at the helm of the houseboat or the *doonga*, attract the notice of visitors. Besides being boatwomen and farmers, the women of Kashmir lend a hand to their menfolk at shawl-making, embroidery and other handicrafts. They wear the *pheran*, the voluminous Kashmiri gown, hemmed with a border and hanging in awkward folds. The long, loose *pheran* covers their physique no doubt, but does not blunt their physical appeal. Whereas a Muslim woman's *pheran* is knee-length, loose and embroidered in front and on the edges; a Hindu woman's *pheran* touches her feet. For the sake of smartness and ease it is tied at the waist with folded material (its brocade edges falling as tassels in the centre) called *lhungi*. The long, loose sleeves are fashionably

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<sup>2</sup> Milne, J.: *Road to Kashmir*.

decorated with brocade. With this type of Hindu costume goes the head-dress called *taranga*, which is tied to a hanging bonnet and tapers down to the heels from behind. The folds of the *taranga* are made of brightly-pressed linen fastened to a pointed red-coloured and brocaded skull cap with a few gold pins at the sides. Over the head and ears are pieces of muslin embroidered in gold thread. The younger Hindu women, however, have taken to the sari, after the 'reform movement' of the thirties. Even then, on the wedding day they have to wear the *taranga* ceremonially. It is covered with the *palav* of the bride's wedding sari. *Taranga* thus stays as part of the bridal trousseau.

Though continuing to be in much greater use among the Muslim women, the fashion trends have edged out the *pheran*, which is replaced by *shalwar-kameez*, but the total effect of the ensemble is hardly attractive compared to the *pheran*. Unlike a Hindu woman's *pheran*, which gives her a Roman look, the Muslim woman's *pheran* is beautifully embroidered in front. Their headgear, the *kasaba*, looks very different from the *taranga*. It is red in colour, tied turban-like and held tight by an abundance of silver pins and trinkets. It has an overhanging pin-scarf which falls gracefully over the shoulders. A work-a-day *shalwar* goes with it. Unmarried Muslim girls wear skull caps, embroidered with gold thread and embellished with silver pendants, trinkets and amulets.

The dress of a Gujjar woman of the hills in the Valley is very much similar to that worn by the Turkish village women. It consists of an ample *shalwar* and full-skirted tunic with loose sleeves. A thick veil on the head falls back to the shoulders. This costume is a quaint replica of the attire of the shepherd women all over the Middle East. The Gujjar women knit their hair in multiple plaits which hang in front, covering half of their moon-shaped faces.

Kashmiri women generally have such love of jewellery that their headgear, ears, necks and arms glisten with ornaments. The typical ornament that Hindu women wear



is the *dejharoo*, a pair of gold pendants, hanging on a silk thread or gold chain which passes through holes in the ears pierced at the top end of the lobes. The *dejharoo* is the Kashmiri Panditani's *mangal-sutra*. Muslim women wear bunches of earrings, the weight of which is supported by a thick silver chain. And there are ample bracelets and necklaces. The whole ensemble lends a most artistic effect to the appearance of Kashmiri women.

With the passage of years, an appreciable change has come about in the dress of the Kashmiri women. Slowly and imperceptibly they are changing their dress styles—whatever is in vogue under the impact of modern influences. Saris, *shalwar-kameez*, *churidars* and jeans are becoming popular, yet none of these belong to them as much as the good old *pheran*.

### People of Jammu

The Dogras inhabiting the hilly tract bounding the mountains of the Kashmir Valley on the south and extending to the plains of the Punjab, are descended from Aryan stock. They speak the Dogri language—a mixture of Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian—whose origin goes back to the Indo-Aryan branch of Sanskrit. A sturdy people, the Dogras are divided into several castes and sects. A common attribute of the Dogras of various denominations is their physical sturdiness. Their staple food consists of rice, wheat and pulses. Their dress is simple—a short coat or a flowing shirt, with pyjamas loose at the knees and tight-fitting at the ankles. The men's turban on the head is generally complemented by a *kamarband* at the waist. With a shawl or *dupatta* thrown over the head, women put on tight-fitting bodice or jumpers over pyjamas which resemble those of the menfolk.

The Dogra Rajputs, who have traditionally made the Army their profession, do not, however, have a big build; their average height being five feet four inches (160 cm). They are active to the point of being indefatigable and can stand long marches over hilly terrain. The men's

complexion is light brown, the women's lighter still. A simple and almost child-like people, the Dogras tend to be traditionally clannish, more so in the rural areas. The Brahmins of the Jammu province are mainly engaged in agriculture. A minority among them comprise the priest class. The Chibbalis and the Sudans—the chief sects among the Muslim Rajputs—are also a martial race.

Distinct and remarkable, Dogra cuisine complements the people's achievements as soldiers, painters and builders of temples and forts. The dishes are delicious, with abundant nutritive value. One of the dainties of Dogra dishes is *auria*, made from yoghurt and potatoes. Like the *ambal*, the sour broth containing gourd, potatoes, meat and sweet-roots, *auria* is taken with boiled rice. Other Dogra specialities are *ghiwar*, a sort of bread fried in *ghee*, *thothru*, well-kneaded fermented balls cooked in boiling *ghee* with almonds, and *mukand bari*—dried wheat flour pieces also fried in *ghee*. The culinary art of Dogras, in demand throughout India, is recalled in the popular saying: 'As is the food, so is the mind'.

Through the Basohli school and other paintings, Dogras have made a notable contribution to the development of painting in India. From the 18th to the 19th centuries, the hill state of Jammu produced works of art which were closely connected with other schools of India. Basohli emerged as a great centre of painting early in the 18th century. Many of the paintings gave pictorial expression to the Bhakti movement; some were Shaivistic in theme. Outstanding paintings of this school depict Krishna's frolics, scenes from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagvata*, etc. The Basohli paintings in 'laughing colours' evince a remarkable blend of line and colour. They have been characterised as 'poems in colour' for their extraordinary lyrical quality. Distinguished by decorative harmony and intensity of expression, these works (whether portraits of princes and other nobles or illustrations of scriptures) evinced rare verisimilitude. No wonder then that Dr Herman



Goetz described Basohli paintings as "the great achievements of Indians, nay, of human art."

The Dogra dynasty, founded by Gulab Singh, provided a great fillip to painting and the arts. Temples, built by the dozen, were embellished with priceless paintings and murals. Religious themes continue to inspire some artists of the province, who draw their inspiration from the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu, containing Basohli and other paintings, manuscripts and archaeological finds.

Jammu province is inhabited by diverse castes and sects. Khatris and Mahajans are of Punjabi stock. They are less handsome than the Rajputs and are not hardy like them. They generally follow sedentary occupations like trade and commerce. Harijans constitute another large segment of the population. They are agriculturists and pursue semi-skilled professions, including those of cobblers and scavengers.

Strong-muscled, virile, simple and truthful, the Paharis inhabit the hilly tracts of the 'middle mountains'. Theirs is a hard life, rearing sheep and cultivating the sparse available tracts of land on hilly, sloppy terraces for barley, wheat and maize. This area also supplies a considerable number of recruits to the Army. Lack of communications with the outside world has isolated them and contributed to their comparative poverty, as well as to their remaining practically untouched by what are called by them "the vices and vulgarities of towns". Their hospitality is exemplary. Frugal in habits, their diet is simple and sparse—wheat bread with whey and lentils. Their language is a mixture of Dogri, Punjabi and Hindi. Generally dressed in grey woollens and loose pyjamas, they also flaunt a *kamarband*. Women wear long, loose tunics, close-fitting *churidars* and *dupatta* or cap to complete their charming ensemble. The Kashmiris who have immigrated into this region have adopted the same dress and speak a mixture of Pahari and Kashmiri dialects.

The Dogras are deeply attached to their land. Much of their folklore—myths and legends—relates to their shrines.

Religion also contributes to the mass entertainment of the people in the form of *Ras* dances. The stories of popular heroes like Bawa Jitoo and Bua Began are on the lips of the people. The Dogras are justly proud of their glorious contribution to India's military history in having extended the country's frontiers many thousands of kilometres further north to the very borders of Central Asia and Tibet.

The physical features of a Kishtwari are unmistakably those of an Indian—dark complexion, thick protruding lips and broad noses, akin to Dravidians. There is evidence that the Dravidians had penetrated these inner mountains of the Himalayan range before the advent of the first Aryans. Isolated pockets like Kishtwar were not overrun by the Aryans. In the upper strata of society, however, there is some racial mixture, resulting in finer features and lighter complexions. The Kishtwaris, generally, are short statured, simple and unsophisticated but are very hardy. They are sure-footed mountaineers. Guileless and credulous, they are superstitious. Witchcraft prevails among some of them. The people speak the Kishtwari dialect, which is a mixture of Dogri and Kashmiri.

### Ladakhis

The people of Ladakh region have Mongoloid, or, more accurately, Turanian features. In spite of a rigorous climate and formidable and inhospitable landscape, the people have a cheerful disposition and are essentially peace-loving. Fa Hien referred to them as 'men of the snowy mountains'. According to the 1971 Census, the population of Ladakh was estimated at 1,05,000. Fifty-five per cent of the Ladakhis are Buddhist by faith and the rest are Muslims. Amongst the latter is a sprinkling of Muslim immigrants from Yarkand, Sinkiang and the Kashmir Valley.

Ladakh is known as the 'land of the Lamas' and the Buddhists of Ladakh prefer to call their religion Lamaism—which is much the same as Mahayana (or Great Vehicle) form of Buddhism. Lamaism supplants indigenous cults



and beliefs. It has also been adopted for the socio-religious framework. Religion pervades the life of Ladakhis and dominates their life-style. On the whole, Ladakhis persist in their conservatism and want to remain free of external influences, though the overall progressive trends in the state are perceptibly affecting them. The people of Ladakh have a system of dedicating at least one person from each family to priesthood, i.e. to be a Lama. Monastic life imposes celibacy, abstinence and rigorous discipline, affirmed by taking 253 vows. The female monk is called Chomo. Though the Ladakhi Buddhists believe in the Buddha, the Dalai Lama of Tibet is to them the chief spiritual head and the vice-regent of the Buddha on the earth. Monasteries (*gompas* and *chortens*) are to be found everywhere. Prominent with their big, bell-shaped stone structures and metal pinnacles, these monasteries are built on the *samadhis* of Lamas, usually conspicuously on high ground. Lama prayer-flags flutter from the roof-top of *gompas* and *chortens*, presenting picturesque spectacles. There are a score of big *gompas* and a number of smaller ones. The biggest and richest, Hemis *gompa*, situated 49 km from Leh, is the venue of a big festival (on the full-moon night) in June, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava, who propagated Buddhism in Ladakh in 14th century A.D.

Ladakhis call themselves Bo-pa—ancient Bhauttas. They speak a Tibetan language which is a dialect of Tibetan. It is written in the Tibetan script. Some scholars, however, aver that their script is a form of Devanagiri, which was prevalent in Kashmir in 7th century A.D. Many words in the Ladakhi language, especially in religious terminology, are derived from Sanskrit. The printed literature, more so the religious texts, is engraved on stereotyped wooden blocks, which, encased in wooden planks, form their 'books'.

Ladakhis are sincere and honest workers though they lack enterprise. About 90 per cent of them depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The barren land can hardly support even their scanty population. Farming is

dependent on canal water for irrigation. The *zho*—the beast of burden, which is a cross between the yak and the cow—is used for ploughing the land. Barley, wheat, buck-wheat, peas, rapeseed and beans are the main agricultural products. Apples and apricots are grown in warmer regions of low altitude.

Another occupation of the Ladakhis is sheep-rearing. The herdsmen are called *chang-pas*. They rear long-haired goats and sheep from whose under-fleece the famous Kashmiri *pashmina* shawls are made. *Chang-pas* live in tents and are nomadic, going from place to place in search of pastures.

Ladakhis are keenly interested in trade. Wool, in raw form, is their chief commercial product. The men travel long distances, seeking favourable prices for their wares, which consist of salt, dry fruits and cultured pearls and semi-precious stones. In return they get tea, tobacco, grain, sugar, matches and other essential goods from the plains. Women, dressed in their fineries, mind the local business.

Ladakhi men wear long, grey, woollen gowns fringed with sheep-skin and tied at the waist with girdles of blue colour, multi-coloured velvet caps, fringed with black fur earlaps. Their women wear colourful clothes. Their special, turquoise-studded headgear, called *perak*, is made of red cloth or goat-skin and hangs up to the forehead and tapers down to the waist at the back. Brooches of turquoise and other semi-precious stones embellish their headgear, bangles and ear-ornaments.

The staple food of the Ladakhis is *grim*—a kind of barley grown abundantly even at high altitudes—which is eaten as bread, or mixed with butter and tea as a paste. They are invariably meat-eaters. A local drink called *chang* is consumed in ample quantities at festive occasions and receptions following marriages and births.

Polyandry used to be a common feature among the Ladakhis. The elder brother's wife was the wife of all brothers. The children begotten of such unions had various



fathers. Short of emotional strain which modern social impact can have on the complacent wife of multi-husbands, this system had worked well to keep the population steady and patrimonial property undivided. The system has been discarded by the young Ladakhis, for it was banned by an official order in 1948. There is no law yet against polygamy. Muslim women are still in *purdah*.

Playing polo on fast-racing ponies is the most popular entertainment in Ladakh. It was the Dards of Gilgit (once pure Aryans and Buddhists in the pre-Christian era) who introduced the game in the area. The horse is not changed with each *chukkar* (Britishers call it *chukka*) as in Western style polo but each player carries on with the same sturdy pony. Primitive wooden balls are still used for the game—played on rough, uneven pitch—whose popularity persists in Ladakh.

Ladakh offers the hunters exotic hunts of markhor, ibex, red bear, snow leopard, wild sheep, antelope, gazelle and marmot. Ladakh is also rich in minerals like gold, copper and semi-precious stones. Maybe, the age-old slumber of the region compounded by the rigours of landscape and climate, has prevented them from unearthing these treasures. Thanks to the impact of the changing events, they are beginning to realise that they need to come out of their isolation and be part of the mainstream of life in the state which is buzzing with development activities. This would not affect their spiritual heritage and way of life, which are so dear to them.

### Gujjars

The hill people of Kashmir, called Gujjars, mostly herdsmen by occupation, are found in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir. They are said to be Rajputs who had migrated from Rajasthan and adopted the Muslim faith. They are tall and well-built, with a prominently Jewish cast of features. Their dialect, Gujari, is now identified as a form of a Rajasthani. They raise sheep and cattle and trek on foot,

from the warm regions of Jammu up into the high mountains—where they have their small wooden or mud huts—in search of green pastures. Their nutritious diet consists of maize bread, whey, jungle roots and fruits, no doubt contributing to their remarkable vitality and longevity. Despite poverty and the rigours of their life, they are disposed to look upon the sunny side of life. Their instinct to cohere is strong in them. Members of the family are knit together by a common goal and their nomadic occupations.

### New Year Festivals in Kashmir

The New Year's day falls on first *Navratra*—the first day of the new moon in the month of *Chaitra*. In every Hindu home, it begins with an invocation to Lakshmi, the goddess of bounty. In every family, a young lady lays a large plate with paddy, sugar, curds, fruit, walnut, coins, a mirror, ink-holder and the New Year scroll. Early in the morning she shows the plate to every inmate and thus seeks the blessings of the goddess for moral and material development of members of the family.

Encircled by orchards and overlooking the lovely expanse of the Dal lake near Srinagar, Hari Parbat, the fort-topped hill, sacred to both Hindus and Muslims, is swarmed in the afternoon by people of all communities. They carry the *samovar*—the Kashmiri tea-making kettle—and other picnic paraphernalia with them. There they bask in the sun, so pleasant after the long winter. Newly appeared green and pink-and-white almond blossom adds colour to the gay spectacle.

The *Navroz* festival of the Shia Muslims comes a week after the New Year's day. They celebrate this nine-day festival with good eating and activities showing a spirit of gay abandon, in contrast to recitation of religious dirges that characterise most of their festivals.

In April comes *Durga Ashtami*, followed by *Ramnavami*. Old women in Hindu homes sow wheat in small and pretty basins, water these daily with milk and sing prayers in



praise of the 'goddess of plenty'. The ritual goes on for eight days. The ninth day, or the *Ramnavami*, is the birthday of Lord Rama when Hindus go to Rama temples and offer prayers. For the Kashmiri Pandits the day is also connected with goddess Durga, and they celebrate it with a feast of rice and meat viands, after the prayers.

In the middle of the same month or on the *Baisakhi* day, starts the New Year of the *Vikrami Samvat*. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs flock to the Mughal Gardens. For Hindus, the Ishabar spring near Nishat Bagh is the pilgrim centre for this festival. The day presents a grand spectacle of colour and gaiety on the Dal lake and in the gardens that flank it.

### Other Festivals

Kashmiris are simple and superstitious. The manner in which they celebrate their festivals is as distinctive as their beautiful Valley is unique.

The *Urs* (or *ziarats*) held annually at the shrines of Muslim saints on their death anniversaries are typical Kashmiri festivals, replete with colour and gaiety. There is a Kashmiri saying, '*Sheene Meesha, wava Batamol, rooda Bahauddin*', which, paraphrased with reference to the context, means: "It snows when the *Urs* of Meesha Sahib is held, it is windy when the *Urs* of Batamol Sahib takes place, it rains on the occasion of the *Urs* of Bahauddin." These *Urs*, popular despite the rigours of weather, in winter, spring and the rainy season, respectively, along with other *Urs* pertaining to the saints, Makdum Sahib, Dastgir Sahib, Shah Hamdan, etc. in different parts of Srinagar, attract not only Muslims (the Sunnis only—the Shia sect of Muslims does not participate) but Hindus and Sikhs also.

This intercommunal participation is also true of the *Urs* celebrations at Chrar-i-Sharif (the shrine of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, the patron-saint of Kashmir), at Baba Rishi (near Tangmarg), at Aishmukam (the shrine of Zaina Shah), at Anantnag (the shrine of Rishi Mol), at Doda (the shrine of Sheikh Farid-ud-Din), etc. An interesting feature of the

*Urs* celebrations at Batamaloo (the locality in Srinagar named after the saint, Batamöl Sahib) and in Anantnag (Rishi Mol's anniversary) is that both Muslims and Hindus abstain from taking meat during the course of the festival.

The anniversary of Rishi Pir, a Hindu saint, held on the fifth day of the full moon of *Baisakh*, at his home in Srinagar, is attended by Muslims also. Earlier, the Kashmiri Pandits of Srinagar observe a fast on the death anniversary of Rupa Bhawani, a lady-saint. A *havana* ceremony is performed by the descendants of the saint at Vaskur, the village where she was born. In the month of *Baisakh*, the Hindus participate in the annual fair at the shrine of Badrikali, near Handwara.

Reverting to Muslim festivals which are celebrated nationally, *Shab-i-Mairaj* is followed by *Shab-i-Barat*. The dates of these festivals change in accordance with the appearance of the moon and shift by one month each year. During the night of *Shab-i-Barat*, Muslims keep vigil. Legend goes that on this night the Holy Prophet visits each house and relieves the pains of suffering humanity.

Then comes *Jeth Ashtami*, succeeded in a month by *Har Ashtami*. These two days are the birthday and the incarnation day, respectively, of the Ragnya goddess. Hindus fast on these days and go on a pilgrimage to Khir Bhawani, a well-known spring-girt temple. After a bath in the cool stream nearby, incense and candles are burnt at the altar of the goddess.

The counterpart of Khir Bhawani (according to Dr Vijay Kaul of Anantnag), is Devibal in Anantnag, which is also a spring-girt temple. It is visited on these *Ashtamis* by Hindus living in contiguous areas. A belief connected with these ancient shrines is that their water changes colour according to the state of the society. It has been known to become black before a disaster or calamity.

During the month of *Ramzan*, Muslims abstain from eating or drinking during the day. Every morning after early breakfast they go to the *mohalla* mosque for *namaz*



(prayers) and listen to recitations from the Holy Quran. In some homes the recital goes on the whole day. At sunset the fast is broken by sipping water and then comes the usual dinner. On the twenty-sixth day of *Ramzan*, Muslims give alms to the poor and prepare food in *bandar* (community kitchen) and distribute it to the high and the low. The *Jumat-ul-vida* and *I'd-ul-Fitr* festivals are connected with the holy *I'd*.

The *I'd* is celebrated with eclat and pious enthusiasm. Every Muslim dons a new dress and relishes a variety of dishes. Muslim women perform the graceful *ruf* dances, singing lilting songs. Standing in rows, one facing the other, while holding their hands, they advance and retreat rhythmically.

*Rakhi* or *Raksha Bandhan* in northern India is the day for brothers and sisters to renew the affectionate ties that bind them. This custom has caught on in Kashmir. On this day, the Kashmiri Hindus in Srinagar climb the temple of Shankaracharya on a hill top that surveys the Dal lake and a large slice of the mountain-girt Valley. This is believed to be an abode of Lord Shiva. But the more revered abode is situated in the far-off, glacier-bound cave-shrine of Amarnath where pilgrims from all parts of India behold sacred pigeons—believed to be incarnations of Shiva and Parvati. Those who cannot trek to Amarnath make it to the Thajivara cave—3 km from the town of Bijibrara—to worship the Shiva *lingam*. The belief is—adds Dr Vijay Kaul—that three pilgrimages to this shrine equal the merit gained by the Amarnath *yatra*.

In August, just eight days after *Rakhi*, falls *Janam Ashtami*, the birthday of Lord Krishna. Hindus fast on this day, hold religious meetings to propagate the teachings of the *Gita*. The *Ras Leela* (opera dance) of Lord Krishna is staged at some places. Music and dance continue till moon-rise, the traditional time of the birth of the Lord.

Kashmiris are proud of the Vitasta (the Jhelum river) and they love it. On *Vaitha Truvah*, they offer prayers to it.

Earthen lamps, set afloat on the river, bedecked with floating and flickering lights, present a captivating, memorable spectacle. The full name of the festival held on the 13th day of the lunar fortnight of *Bhadon* (August-September), is *Vaitha-Vatur-Truvah* which literally means: 'Vaitha, for the Jhelum-source-thirteenth day'. A festival is held at an ancient temple at Verinag, the source of the Jhelum, in which Hindus, coming from all parts of the Valley, participate along with some local Muslims. A big *havana* ceremony is performed on the occasion.

*Diwali*, the festival of light, is not a typically Kashmiri festival but it is an occasion for the *puja* of the new moon of *Kartik* (October-November). Hindu houses and business premises are tastefully decorated and illuminated.

The Muslim festival, *Muharram*, marks the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the Prophet's grandson, who was murdered at Karbala. Huge *taziyas* made of paper and wood are taken out in procession. The mourners chant funeral hymns.

The birthday of Guru Nanak Dev in November is a very auspicious day for the Sikhs. They visit Chati Patshahi, near Hari Parbat. Epistles from the *Granth Sahib* are recited throughout the day with occasional breaks when *prasad* is distributed.

On the tenth of *Asvin* (September-October), *Dussehra* is celebrated to commemorate the victory of Lord Rama, the epic hero, over Ravana, the demon-king. Effigies of Ravana, and his condemned tribe, are burnt at sunset and people of all communities come to watch the spectacle.

Guru Govind Singh's birthday falls in the month of December. The Guru's chivalrous deeds are recounted in song to infuse his spirit into the Sikhs.

A typically Kashmiri festival known as *Khichri Amavasya* falls in the month of *Posh* (December-January). Kashmir is believed to have been the abode of *yakshas* in ancient times. The *yaksha* spirit is invited to relish *khichri* (rice cooked with dal and *ghee*). It is believed that during the night the *yaksha* comes and tastes the *khichri* served neatly in the



attic along with a fish.

In the month of *Magh* (January-February) comes the *Gori Trai*, on the third day after the new moon. The family priest brings gaudy scroll paintings for the children. *Saraswati Puja* is offered on the day.

Throughout northern India, *Basant Panchmi* heralds the spring season, but in Kashmir cold winter still predominates. Bird-loving Kashmiris cook yellow rice, prepare small balls of it and throw them on the roof for crows and other birds.

The *Shivratri* festival, or *Herat*, falls in February-March. It lasts for about a fortnight. Hindus spring-clean their houses during this fortnight, wear new clothes, and buy utensils. Women go to their parents' homes to get the 'festival money', as they call it. Three days before the festival, the worship of Shiva and Parvati starts. It is said that Shiva and Parvati were wedded on *Shivratri*. The offerings in this worship are walnuts soaked in earthen utensils. The four parts of the kernel represent four *yugas*. After some days, people are seen carrying baskets containing these nuts to be distributed among relatives and friends.

### Jammu Division

The people of Jammu division are fun-loving. This trait of theirs is seen at its best during the celebration of festivals. The *Bikrami* (Indian) calendar for them is a long procession of fairs and festivals, which enliven social life and bring people of all communities together. Groups of merry-makers, observing these festivities, romp from village to village. The *Lohri* festival, marking the culmination of the cold season, is celebrated with zest everywhere. Children go from door to door to collect subscriptions for the community bonfires. When the fires are lit at night, the young and old gather round the flaming fires throwing parched grain, coins and other offerings into these with gusto. Gay dancing at the venues goes on for hours.

On the occasion of the *Holi* festival, Muslims and Sikhs

join Hindus in spraying friends with pails of coloured water. This spring festival, replete with revelry, lasts three days in the cities and villages.

The Vaishno Devi shrine, dedicated to goddess Shakti, is perched on a hill, about 45 km from Jammu city. It has been the cynosure of pilgrims from all over India since ancient times. During *Navratri*, Jammu is crowded with pilgrims on the way to, or, returning from the shrine. The city wears a festive look, with pilgrims carrying staves and wearing *mauli* (yellow and red thread) garlands and amulets.

*Melas* (fairs) are also held in the city and the principal towns on *Baisakhi* or New Year's day. Hindus bathe in the sacred rivers, streams and springs. Rejoicing and fun follows the devotional rituals in the morning. *Bhangra* and other dances rendered by troupes are enjoyed by the people in the evening.

Processions are taken out on the *Ramnavami* festival—the centre of attention being tableaux, presenting scenes from the *Ramayana*. Besides offerings to and worship of the deity at the famous Raghunath temple in Jammu, discourses on the *Ramayana* are given there on all the nine days.

*Shivratri* is a three-day festival in Jammu and is celebrated with éclat at Purmandal, Billavar and Jhandi. The Shiva temples dotting the province are crowded with people for three days. The shrine of Shiv Khori is visited by pilgrims on this occasion. The dark half-moon night of *Chaitra*, called *Chaitra Chadish*, is the date for popular festivals at spring and river shrines, like Gupt Ganga and Purmandal. *Diwali* is a gay occasion in the province, as in the rest of India. Rows of gay lamps are lit in streets and homes, and sweets distributed.

Guru Ravi Das's birthday is celebrated with great enthusiasm in Jammu city. Leaders of different communities pay tributes to this great man who belonged to a backward community but won the esteem of all because of his spiritual eminence. Public meetings follow *kirtans* and



*bhajans*. Likewise, the *Gurpurabs*, Guru Nanak's birthday, *Navroz* and *I'd* are celebrated, providing opportunities for the expression of good fellowship among the various communities and castes. *Buddha Jayanti*, *Mahavir Jayanti*, *Gandhi Jayanti* and *Christmas* are also celebrated here as in other parts of the country.

*Tihar* is an interesting festival observed in Bhadarwah and Kishtwar in the months of *Chaitra* (March-April). Springs and *baulis* receive a spring-cleaning and this is followed on the next day by worship of *nagas* (serpents), to whom rice and floral offerings are made. *Samkrant* or the beginning of a month (in *Bikrami* era) is regarded as a sacred day by Hindus. Women bathe in rivers in the small hours and observe a day's fast. People in Ramban and nearby villages specially observe *Singh Samkrant*, the first of *Bhaddon* month, with a bath in the river Chenab (also called Chandrabhaga) in the morning, offering flowers to the sacred river. On this day, a bath in this holy river is held to be as sacrosanct as the one in the Ganga at Haridwar. According to J.N. Ganhar,<sup>3</sup> "local tradition traces the origin of the festival to the time of the Pandavas, about 3,500 years ago."

## Ladakh

In spite of the climatic rigours of Ladakh, the people are full of life and mirth, and celebrate festivals with music, dance and song. Their myths and legends revolve round gods and fairies and there is magic, mysticism and romance everywhere. There are festivals that herald spring and coincide with harvesting. Dance and song—symbolical and interpretative as in the rest of India—are spontaneous and unfettered by rigid rules, though lacking in systematised idiom.

Ladakhi peasant women dance to the accompaniment of Mon musicians, playing clarinets shaped like the Indian

<sup>3</sup> J.N. Ganhar: *Jammu Shrines and Pilgrimages*, Ganhar Publications, New Delhi, 1975.

*shehnai*, a round-topped drum and cymbals. The dancers form a group, traversing in circles, opening and closing the right hand in the gesture of a bud blossoming, comparable to a Rajasthani spring dance. The melodious song that accompanies them, runs as follows:

I know a path that leads into the hills,  
Where flowers are watered by many little rills,  
There lives the spirit of La (pass),  
He was a prince once, now he is a Sta (horse),  
There grows the sweetest greenest grass,  
I known a path that leads towards the river;  
Where pebbles shine like stones of silver,  
There lives no spirit but a princess,  
So small, so wise and so priceless,  
And, there is sweet music, but no sweet green grass.

Ladakhis, a simple friendly people, have a song for every mood and moment. They sing while working in the fields, cutting grass or spinning. A peasant marriage is a special occasion for song and dance. The Mon musicians also play during the fast game of polo, which adds to the entertainment of the people. In an amusing playlet, an entire game of polo is enacted with little, wooden, hobby horses. The comic acting is rendered without words, with only loud music boosting the champions, to the glee of the onlookers.

The famous mystery plays of the monasteries are played during the popular Spring Festival and Fair. The mystic dance is performed by the Lamas, who are dressed in elaborate brocade costumes, some wearing masks of animals, or typifying legendary human, semi-human or demoniacal characters. The dancers whirl in frenzied movements, depicting the triumph of good (Buddhism) over evil. The demons struggle for the human soul until the climax when the entry of the 'enlightened one' brings about their defeat. The 'devil dances', as these are popularly called, are important in the social life of Ladakhis. A gay community,



Ladakhis entertain themselves with songs and dances, on festivals and other occasions, to a greater extent than any other people in India.

## SOURCES OF KASHMIR HISTORY

Kashmiris who distinguished themselves in most branches of Sanskrit learning were also good historians, and left almost continuous, written records of the history of the Valley. Kalhana, 12th-century poet-historian, who wrote the *Rajatarangini* (A.D. 1148-1149), mentioned about eleven earlier chronicles, which he had consulted. Besides, there is extant a good collection of records and traditions, as well as archaeological and numismatical evidence. The knowledge of the ancient and medieval history of Kashmir, secured from these sources, is bolstered by the accounts of foreign travellers who visited Kashmir from time to time.

The name of Kashmir does not occur in Vedic literature. Some of the *Puranas*, however, refer to the 'Kasmiras' in the list of northern nations. Varahmitra (A.D. 500) includes the 'Kasmiras' in the north-eastern division in the *Brahtsamhita*. Sri Harsha in his *Rainavali* mentions the saffron of the 'Kasmira' country. The earliest note on Kashmir by foreigners occurs in the writings of the Greek geographer, Hecataeus (500 B.C.), who refers to 'Kaspapyros', a city of the 'Gandharians'. A Chinese record (A.D. 541) refers to a country "enveloped on all sides like a precious jewel by the snowy mountains".

Hiuen Tsang, who visited the Valley in the year A.D. 631, records the conversion of the people to Buddhism by Majjahantika.<sup>1</sup> The annals of the T'ang dynasty mention the

<sup>1</sup> Also known as Madhyantika, he is said to have developed agriculture in the Kashmir Valley and introduced saffron cultivation for the first time.



arrival of an embassy from the Kashmirian king, T Chen-to-lo-i-li in the Chinese court about A.D. 713. The Chinese pilgrim, Ou-kong, visited Kashmir in the middle of the 8th century A.D. Describing Kashmir as a kingdom surrounded by mountains on all sides, Ou-kong gives the routes intersecting the mountains, leading to Tibet in the east, Baltistan in the north and Gandhara in the west.

Muslim travellers also wrote on Kashmir but the information on historical geography that can be gleaned from these sources is meagre. What Al-Masudi, Al-Qazwini and other Arab geographers wrote about Kashmir is surpassed in content and scope by Alberuni whose *Kitab-ul-Hind*<sup>2</sup> presents an accurate account of the Valley. What he writes about the men and manners and arts and crafts of Kashmiris is confirmed by Sanskrit sources of the period. The fortress of 'Lauhur' mentioned by him has been identified by Aurel Stein as the fortress of 'Lohara'—the 'Loharakotta' of the *Rajatarangini*. Alberuni also describes Rajawari, which is the capital of the hill state of Rajapuri, having the same name, and is mentioned in Kalhana's chronicle.

*Nilamatpurana* is the earliest known (and extant) text of Kashmir. It contains the sacred legends regarding the origin of the Valley, the rites and worships prescribed by Nila—the lord of Kashmir Nagas—and descriptions of various *tirthas* (places of pilgrimage), which have greatly helped in reconstructing the ancient geography of Kashmir. Among the texts dealing specially with the sacred sites is the *Haracharithachintamani* of Jayadratha. There are also more than fifty *mehatmyas* on the important *tirthas*, which, besides describing the location and importance of the places of pilgrimage, provide information about the historical topography of the Valley. Kalhana refers to *Nilamatpurana* as among his sources of information. Kshemendra, the polyhistor in his *Samayatrika*, also provides some useful information about the topographical details of Kashmir.

<sup>2</sup> In chapter 18 of his book, *India*.

Kalhana refers to Kshemendra's other work, *Nrapavali*, which portrayed the socio-political life of the Kashmiris of his time.

### Kalhana and the *Rajatarangini*

The *Rajatarangini*, or the river of kings, by Kalhana Pandit is the earliest extant history of Kashmir. A unique historical poem, written between A.D. 1148 and 1150, the *Rajatarangini* contains valuable political, social and other information pertaining to Kashmir and the rest of India. In the words of H.C. Rawlinson, it is "Hindu India's almost sole contribution to history". Among the extant works of Sanskrit literature, Kalhana's chronicle stands out for its comparatively exact chronology. It has also offered the key for fixing the dates of many Indian scholars who wrote literary and philosophical works. Indeed, the chronicle has contributed a good deal to the reconstruction of ancient Indian history.

Facts regarding Kalhana's person and contemporary life have been gleaned from his narrative by patient research. His father, Champaka, was a Kashmiri nobleman, who held the office of 'lord of the gate' (*dvarpala*), or, commandant of the frontier defences, during the reign of the ill-fated King Harsha. Kalhana's ancestors were devout Shaivites, but he showed the deepest regard for Buddhism. The major portion of Kalhana's life passed in, what was for Kashmir, one long period of civil war and political strife. The commencement of the 12th century brought an important dynastic revolution in Kashmir which affected the political life of the country. King Harsha, whose reign (A.D. 1089-1101), initially secured prosperity and peace, became a victim of his own Neronian disposition. The landed aristocracy of the Damaras, harshly persecuted by him, rose in revolt against the king. Harsha was killed. The usurping brothers, Uchala and Sussala, partitioned the country. In his chronicle, Kalhana speaks admiringly of his father, Champaka, though he does not share the latter's affection for his royal master, Harsha.



### Kalhana as Historian

Kalhana did not belong to that order of Brahmin Pandits or *kavis* who were compelled by poverty or ambition to lay their talents at the feet of vain monarchs. Kalhana's chronicle is neither Voltaire's *History of Russia* nor Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. His was not only a serious contribution to history, it was pre-eminently a work of art (*kavya*). He looked upon himself not merely as a historian but also as a *kavi*, a seer-poet. He considered poetry as an effective vehicle for the attainment of 'special immortality', and paid glowing tributes to poets. R.S. Pandit<sup>3</sup> compared Kalhana to Aeschylus and Homer, "as a poet of veracity and universality".

In Kalhana's work the past of Kashmir is gloriously vivified and re-created. It is his skill as a *kavi*—the merit of his poetic composition—which has saved the history of Kashmir from oblivion. A *kavya* (a *charita* or heroic poem) in form and conception, the *Rajatarangini* consists of about 8,000 verses classified under eight *tarangas* (waves). It is, however, different from other *charitas* because Kalhana has offered a connected narrative of the ruling dynasties of Kashmir from the earliest times down to his own. He embellished the chronicle with occasional elaborate rhetorical descriptions.

As a chronicler, Kalhana preserved independence of

<sup>3</sup> "It is history and it is a poem, though the two perhaps go ill together. . . It is a story of medieval times and often enough, it is not a pleasant story. There is too much of palace intrigue and murder and treason and civil war and tyranny. It is the story of autocracy and military oligarchy. . . it is a story of the kings . . . indeed the very name is the 'river of kings' . . . It was a time when the old economic system was decaying, the old order was changing in Kashmir as it was in the rest of India. Kashmir had been the meeting ground of the different cultures of Asia, the Western, Graeco-Roman and Iranian and the eastern Mongolian, but essentially it was a part of India and the inheritor of Indo-Aryan traditions . . ."—Jawaharlal Nehru, in his Foreword to R.S. Pandit's (English translation) *Rajatarangini*, India Press Ltd., Allahabad, 1934.

judgement. He did not hesitate to point out the errors or weaknesses of the kings under whom he wrote. Kalhana emphasises striking examples of Kashmir's history by reference to similar instances narrated in the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*. At the same time, the poet's love of the Arcadian Vale of Kashmir, abounding in nature's mysterious charms, is revealed in many an inspired passage.

Proper dates are given by Kalhana from the death of Cippata Jayapida (A.D. 813) onwards. He follows the calendar used in the *Lankika* era which had been used in Kashmir for many centuries. Historical events are shown to illustrate political maxims and precepts of diplomacy. The passages in which Kalhana gives in brief the principles of government as adapted to Kashmir then are particularly interesting.

### The Books

There is no doubt that the extant text of the chronicle is in the main the very same as Kalhana left it. Kalhana tells us that he began his work in the *Shaka* year 1070, i.e. A.D. 1148, and he finished it in A.D. 1149. The record in the first three books covers an aggregate period of 3,050 years and consists for the most part of bare dynastic lists of fifty-four reigns, in the midst of more or less legendary traditions and anecdotes.

The first historical name in the chronicle is that of King Asoka (attested by Asoka's famous pillar inscriptions). The historical existence of King Pravarsena, the founder of Srinagar, is borne out by his coins.

Among the Karkota kings, Muktapada Lalitaditya (A.D. 699-736) shines forth as a very powerful monarch whose sway extended far beyond Kashmir and adjacent territories. Kashmiris credit their king with having been victorious over the Turks. Lalitaditya's later conquest of the Bhauttas (or Tibetans) has been verified through Chinese annals. He led expeditions against the states of Kanyakubja (Kanauj), Kalinga (Orissa), Kamboja (Afghanistan) and Ganda



(Bengal). Kalhana describes him as the 'illustrious' emperor, 'the terrestrial Indra'.

Kashmir celebrated Lalitaditya's victories for centuries and, with pardonable exaggeration, called him the universal monarch. Jayapida, fifth descendant of Lalitaditya, however, made a serious attempt to regain the lost supremacy of Kashmir. His romantic adventures took him to Bengal. He too set out for 'the conquest of the earth'.

With the accession of Avantivarman (A.D. 855/6-883), we enter that phase of Kashmir's history of which the chronicler gives a truly historical record. The memory of Avantivarman is still kept green by the ruins of the temples at Avantipur—the town founded by the king. With Avantivarman's son and successor, Sankaravarman (A.D. 884-902), begins the line of kings whose reigns are evidenced by an unbroken series of coins.

The Tantrin soldiers, the Praetorian guards of Kashmir, became all-powerful during the first quarter of the tenth century of the Christian era. The kingdom was a scene of misery and calamities. The Tantrins made and unmade kings at their pleasure. The court was corrupt and dissolute. The Tantrins were defeated by Chakravarman who regained the throne for the third time. In A.D. 950, in the person of Kshemagupta, once again Kashmir had a rapacious and licentious monarch. He married Didda, daughter of Simharaja, the chief of Lohara, and thereby changed the course of history of Kashmir. Didda ruled—first as queen mother and then as queen, after Kshemagupta's death. Driven by the lust for power, she ruled Kashmir with an iron hand for twenty-three years. Though cruel, unscrupulous and dissolute, she possessed statesmanlike sagacity and administrative ability. She was succeeded by the house of Lohara, the new dynasty, which continued to hold Kashmir as well as its original home, Lohara, till the time of Kalhana and later.

About half of the chronicle (comprising nearly 3,450 *shlokas*) is devoted by Kalhana to that half of the 12th

century which lies between the downfall of Harsha and the date of the composition of the chronicle. This lengthy treatment has the advantage that an authentic contemporary picture of the social, political and economic aspects of Kashmir is presented. The rebel Damaras disturbed the peace of the country. Pretenders rose and fell. The people of Srinagar suffered a desperate siege. Jayasimha ruled over Kashmir with "cunning diplomacy and unscrupulous intrigue". The concluding stanzas of the chronicle are devoted to the praise of Jayasimha's queen, Radda Devi, and their children. That takes us to the twenty-second year of Jayasimha's reign, A.D. 1149-50. Kalhana concludes the poem with a verse comparing his chronicle, the *River of Kings* with the swift current of the Godavari, a river of south India.

The *Rajatarangini* is much more than an account of the reigns of the kings of Kashmir. Kalhana presents an authentic picture of the contemporary social and political life.<sup>4</sup> The chronicle is a vast mine of information about the past of Kashmir and the contiguous territories. It also contributes to the understanding of the chequered course of the history of Kashmir after Kalhana's days. In Kalhana's own days, his contemporary, Mankha, described Kashmir and

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<sup>4</sup> Reviewing a paper on 'Kalhana: Poet-Historian of Kashmir'—based on a lecture delivered by the present writer in London on 14 October, 1955, and published later by the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore—the *Asian Review*, London (July 1957) observed: "Well-known Western scholars like Buhler, Wilson and Cunningham have analysed the material as furnished by Kalhana as the foundation of the history of Kashmir." The reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement* (3.8.19) characterised the *Rajatarangini* as "unique in Sanskrit literature", in that "its chronology and data are more or less accurate". K.P.G. of the *Eastern World*, London (July 1957) opined: "To well-intentioned people unaware of the extent to which Kashmir has always been an integral part of India, this study of Kalhana is a valuable reminder. Professor Dhar's lecture illuminates the continuity of past and present in the relations between Kashmir and India." These foreign quotes underline the importance that is attached by historians abroad to Kalhana's chronicle.



Pravarapura (present Srinagar) in the third canto of his *Srikanthacharita*, written between A.D. 1128 and 1144.

During the Muslim period, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (A.D. 1420-1470), who attracted chroniclers and poets to his court and showed keen interest in Sanskrit—though Persian was the language of the court—had the *Rajantarangini* brought up to date by two famous chroniclers of his reign—Jona Raja and Mulla Ahmad, in Sanskrit and Persian, respectively. The greater portion of Jona Raja's chronicle, *Rajavali*, deals with the reigns of the later Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to Queen Didda, thus taking the story to A.D. 1459. His pupil, Shrivara, resumed the thread in *Jaina-Rajatarangini* and in four chapters chronicled the events from A.D. 1439 to 1486, following Kalhana's style. More than a century later, the *Rajatarangini* was again updated during the rule of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, who also showed equal respect for classical Sanskrit literature. The task was entrusted by Akbar to Prajya Bhatta in A.D. 1575. The fourth chronicle after Kalhana, Prajya Bhatta's work was called *Rajavalipataka*, and ended with the year A.D. 1513-14. Completed by his pupil, Shuka, after the annexation of Kashmir by Akbar (A.D. 1586), the work has been rated as inferior in composition to Shrivara's chronicle. Jehangir commissioned Haider Malik (in A.D. 1617) to bring out an abridged edition of the *Rajatarangini* in Persian.

Though the later chroniclers, in continuing Kalhana's work underlined the importance of his chronicle, their products lacked the literary merits of the *Rajatarangini*. They were, however, more clear and perspicuous than Kalhana. Since Persian was in vogue, Mulla Ahmad's translation of the *Rajatarangini* (named *Bahr-ul-Asman*) and Haider Malik's history were written in Persian. Narayan Kaul Ajiz, a Persian scholar and litterateur, followed Haider Malik to write *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* (History of Kashmir) in A.D. 1710. Abul Fazal's *Akbar-Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* constitute a mine of information about history, geography, administration, antiquities, arts, industries etc. of Kashmir. Jehangir's *Tuzk*

contains excellent descriptions of Kashmir, the land he loved so much. Under the rule of later Mughals, Muhammad Azam Kaul wrote *Wadnat-i-Kashmir*, completing it in A.D. 1746, after eleven years. His son, Khwaja Muhammad Aslam, made additions to the history.

Not much information is available about Kashmir under the Afghans (A.D. 1752-1819). The Sikh regime that followed for twenty-seven years (A.D. 1819-1846) was well covered by a number of European travellers. Notable among these and other European travellers are Father Jerome Xavier (who accompanied Emperor Akbar to Kashmir), Francis Bernier (who came to Kashmir with Aurangzeb), Desideri (November 1714), George Forester (1783) and Vigne (1835—during Sikh rule). Drew, Lawrence and Cunningham visited Kashmir after the Valley had come under Dogra rulers and under the suzerainty of the British India government.<sup>5</sup> A detailed survey of the state's history, geography, physical features, antiquities, ethnology and composition of the people was conducted. The latest connected accounts of Kashmir's history are to be found in the works of P.N.K. Bamzai<sup>6</sup> and Prem Nath Bazaz.<sup>7</sup> An interesting account of Kashmir in the last decades of the 19th century was penned by Walter W. Lawrence. Alexander Cunningham's survey of the old Hindu ruins threw light on the history of the old structures mentioned in the chronicles of Kalhana and the historians who followed him. Excavations at various sites yielded evidence, providing significant data on historic and prehistoric periods of Kashmir. The numismatic evidence—in the shape of ancient gold, silver, copper and brass coins—has furnished evidence of a chain of kings, as mentioned by Kalhana and other chroniclers, up to the modern times.

<sup>5</sup> Walter W. Lawrence: *The Valley of Kashmir*, London, 1895.

<sup>6</sup> P.N.K. Bamzai: *A History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> Prem Nath Bazaz: *History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1954.



## ANCIENT HISTORY

The ancient history of Kashmir is 'wrapped up in mystery'. An interesting legend, however, persists. According to mythological traditions—corroborated by geological evidence—the Valley of Kashmir was originally a vast lake, whose level was hundreds of feet higher than the bed of the Valley. The name of Kashmir (in Sanskrit: *ka*, water and *shimira*, dessicate) variously means 'land dessicated with water,' or (*kas*, channel and *mir*, mountain) 'a deep trough with rocky walls'.

*Nilamatpurana* contains the oldest record of the legend referred to by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. The legend has it that the lake Satisar (the lake of Sati, named after Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva) was the favourite resort of Parvati. Lake demons infested Satisar; at their head was Jalodbhava ('the water-born'). They killed and devoured human beings. The sage Kashyapa, grandson of Brahma, heard the stories of distress of the people of Satisar. He did a long penance to relieve the sufferings of the people. His prayer was granted. Goddess Sharika appeared before him in the form of a *hari*, a myna, with a pebble in her mouth. This she deftly dropped over the demon, Jalodbhava. It grew bigger and bigger, assuming the dimensions of a hillock—the present fort-clad Hari Parbat (the hill of Hari)—which smothered Jalodbhava. With his exit from the scene, his fellow-demons disappeared. The water of the huge lake was drained off at a depression at Baramulla. Kashmir, thus peopled by Kashyapa, was named after him 'Kashyapa

Mir', which was later shortened into 'Kashmir'.

There are variations to the theme, in the sense of different legends about the origin of the Valley. According to another version, it was god Vishnu who slew Jalodbhava with his war-disc. A Buddhist legend is referred to by Hieun Tsang. According to this, the Buddha's disciple, Madhyantika, was obliged to an ingratiated dragon to drain the lake to form the Valley, and, subsequently, the former left 500 monks in Kashmir to spread the message of the Buddha.

The lacustrine origin of the land—the common denominator of the legends—is borne out by geological research. Frederick Drew, the geographer of Jammu and Kashmir<sup>1</sup> says, "the traditions . . . are valuable . . . as showing how in early times some races of mankind had learnt to interpret aright the geological records of the history of their dwelling places."

Thus the spirit, if not the substance of the legends, is confirmed by scientific testimonies. "Even at a height of over 12,000 feet (3,648 m) above sea level, I have found fossiliferous limestone, crowded with small corals, crinoid stems and other marine forms", so wrote Dr Neve,<sup>2</sup> who travelled in Kashmir extensively, and who, from this evidence, held that even "lofty peaks may have formed chains of islands" in prehistoric times.

*Karewas*, the flat lacustrine deposits, are geological formations of the Ice Age. These are extant all over the Valley in two groups, the lower and upper. The lower *karewas* have yielded fossil remains of *Elephas Hysudricus*, indicating the Lower Pleistocene Age. The upper *karewa* beds represent the second Inter-glacial Age. The discovery of ground and polished stone axes, hoes, pestles and bone implements at the menhir site of Burzahom, 15 km east of Srinagar, points to the neolithic culture. The Burzahom

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Drew: *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories*.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest F. Neve: *Things Seen in Kashmir*, Seeley & Co. Ltd., London.



discoveries by De Terra<sup>3</sup> have attained significance as one of the only two megalithic sites in the extreme north-west of the Indian sub-continent. The finds of standing megaliths and prone monoliths at this and other sites have established the theory that there was a Stone Age in Kashmir.

The identity and original habitat of these people, however, are still shrouded in mystery. The legend as recorded in the *Nilamatpurana* mentions that people from the south were settled by Kashyapa in the Valley. It could be that the earliest settlers came from the northern parts of Ladakh and Dardistan as well as from the plains of India. Among these, the Indian settlers could not cope with the rigours of the winter climate and used to migrate to the warmer region of Jammu and the Chenab valley.

The earliest among the races that entered Kashmir from the Punjab and other parts of India were the Aryans. They mixed with the aborigines—as they had done in the Punjab and northern India—to form one people. The eastern and north-eastern regions of Kashmir were held by the Bhauttas. These are the modern Bhauttas of Ladakh, of Drass and of the nearby frontier districts.

Kalhana begins his chronicle *Rajatarangini* with an invocation to Lord Shiva (positive proof of the prevalence of Shaivism in his time) and praises the earlier historians (mentioning eleven historical works extant at the time) for services rendered by recording past events. He lists five outstanding features for which Kashmir was celebrated:

Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes:  
Things that even in heaven are difficult to find are  
common here.

Kalhana does not record the events of the hoary past with any measure of verisimilitude. The *Rajatarangini* opens with the name of the glorious king of Kashmir, Gonanda I ("worshipped by the region, which Kailasa lights up...")

<sup>3</sup> De Terra and Peterson: *Studies on the Ice Age in India*.

who ascended the throne in 653 *Kali* (2448 B.C.)—though the date is disputed by historians. Gonanda was a relative of Raja Jarasanda who fought battles against Krishna; in one of these Gonanda was killed.

Kalhana further mentions Damodara I, son of Gonanda I, who occupied the throne thereafter. He too led an expedition against Krishna, fought bravely but lost his life. The kingdom passed into the hands of the Pandavas, the five brothers who are the heroes of the *Mahabharata*. (The famous ruins of Martand and other old temples are still called *Pandav-lari*, or buildings of the Pandavas, by the people.) The ancient temple on the Shankaracharya hill is believed to have been built by Sandiman, one of the Pandava kings. The first of these Pandava kings was Haranadev, son of Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna. One of the Pandava kings of Kashmir was Sundarsena. The beautiful city of Sandimatnagar is said to have been submerged during his reign by an earthquake, which created the Wular lake over the capital.

Kalhana mentions eight more kings who had preceded Asoka. They are Lava, Kusha, Khagendra, Surendra, Godhara, Suvarna, Janaka and Sachinara. Some of these names are associated with founding towns which have been traced.

Despite Kalhana's inaccuracies as to exact chronology, Asoka's is the first name in the chronicle that has a genuine historical basis. Kalhana credits him with the foundation of Srinagar. The capital—with 96,000 dwelling houses 'resplendent with prosperity'—was situated at *Pandrethan* (means 'old town'), a short distance from modern Srinagar. He introduced Buddhism into Kashmir and built numerous *viharas* and *stupas*. The land of Shiva, where Shaivism prevailed, to the point of being the dominant creed, became the cradle of Buddhist philosophy, which produced great scholars like Kumarajiva and Nagarjuna.

Asoka died about 232 B.C. His son, Jaluka, was not so enthusiastic about Buddhism. In fact, he was a devotee of



Shiva. He cleared the land of *malechas* (foreigners), who were probably Indo-Greek hordes and had—according to Kalhana—made incursions into the Valley. After a reign of sixty years, he was succeeded by Damodara, a descendant of Asoka. He also supported Shaivism. Damodar Udar, a city founded on a plateau in the vicinity of Srinagar, is still known by that name—it is presently the site of the Srinagar aerodrome.

Buddhism continued to flourish in Kashmir despite the setback received by the loss of royal patronage. There was a revival of the faith during the reigns of the three Kushan (Indo-Scythian) kings, Kanishka, Hushka and Jushka, whose identities have been confirmed by coins, manuscripts as well as continued existence of Kanishkapur, Hushkapur and Jushkapur—the cities, respectively, founded by these monarchs. They were also great builders of temples and *viharas* (monasteries), which incidentally bear out the great attainments of Kashmiris in architecture and sculpture—in this case, typical though hybrid Graeco-Buddhist art.

Buddhism was very popular in Kashmir during Kanishka's time, when a historical council of Buddhist divines and theologians met in a monastery near Srinagar. The council accorded a superior status to the Mahayana School which was thus born in Kashmir and was developed from there by scholar-monks and missionaries. The commentaries were deposited by Kanishka in a special *stupa*. In the words of Dr Radha Kumud Mookerjee: "These valuable records may still exist buried near Srinagar and may be unearthed by some archaeological excavations in the future."

The sway of Buddhism in Kashmir did not last long but it left a deep impress, discernible to this day. The widespread use of charms and amulets among Hindus and Muslims alike has been traced to the Buddhist practices. The 'order of the *rishis*', which includes both Hindu and Muslim sages, may also be a direct descendant of the

Buddhist *sangha* ('order'). Not only Hindus but Muslims in some areas of the Valley abstain from meat on the anniversary days of their patron-saints (*rishis*). These *rishis* remain celibate like Buddhist *bhikshus* and subsist on alms.

The traditional Brahmanic learning, in the form of Shaivist sect of Hinduism, was revived in the reign of Abhimanyu I. He founded a town named Abhimanyupur (modern Bamyun, a town near Srinagar) where he built a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Gonanda III—the founder of the Gonanda dynasty—and five of his successors, initiated an anti-Buddhist campaign, which reached its apex in the reign of Nara, the sixth in the line. Four more rulers followed; only their names are known.

The white Hun, Mihirkula, seized the throne of Kashmir in A.D. 515. He is still remembered for his acts of gross cruelty. He favoured Shaivism at the cost of Buddhism. He built a shrine of Shiva near Srinagar. The kings who followed him were good and virtuous. One of the descendants, Gopaditya, is said to have built the temple on the Gopa hill—now called Shankaracharya in Srinagar.

Another king of note, Parvasena II (who conquered Kashmir in A.D. 580, the date confirmed by Hieun Tsang), founded Pravarsenapura (shortened to Pravarapura), the site of the present city of Srinagar. He died after ruling the country for sixty years.

The reign of Durlabhavardhana (A.D. 625-661), who established the Karkota dynasty,<sup>4</sup> is borne out by his coins. Hieun Tsang visited the country during his rule and found remarkable religious tolerance prevailing everywhere with Buddhism existing side by side with Hinduism. Pratapaditya II (A.D. 661-711), son of Durlabhavardhana, ascended the throne after his father's death. He founded a town, Pratapapura, now called Tapar and situated 25 km to the west of Srinagar. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Chandrapida (A.D. 711-719), who is mentioned in the Chinese

<sup>4</sup> Karkota is the mythical serpent mentioned in the *Mahabharata*.



annals. Renowned for acts of piety and justice, Chandrapida and his queen founded a number of temples. The rule of Tarapida, second son of Pratapaditya, for four years (A.D. 719-724), was marked by his cruel and oppressive deeds.

The third son of Pratapaditya, namely, Muktapida, ascended the throne after him. Better known as Lalitaditya, his reign (A.D. 724-761) was marked by conquests over a considerable portion of the Indian mainland and large tracts of the Central Asian regions, thus recalling the imperial sway of the Mauryas. After subjugating the petty states around the kingdom of Kashmir, he is reputed to have conquered the Punjab, Kanauj, Tibet, Badakshan and nearby territories. Kalhana records that during Lalitaditya's rule, his victories were annually celebrated. Alberuni remarks: "The second of *Chaitra* is a great festival day in Kashmir in honour of victory of its king over the Turks." Historians have compared him with his contemporaries, Charlemagne the Great and Haroun al-Rashid. He ushered in an era of national glory and prosperity in the country.

Buddhism and Hinduism, the two prominent religions of his time, received Lalitaditya's patronage in equal degree. He constructed temples dedicated to the Buddha as well as for Shiva, Vishnu and other gods of the Hindu pantheon. He liberally patronised men of letters. Many famous learned men of India and other countries adorned his court—including great Sanskrit scholars like Vakpatiraja and Bhavabhuti. Lalitaditya was a great builder. He built the famous temple at Martand (dedicated to the sun), whose impressive ruins bear testimony to the splendour of the times. Likewise, his capital city (Parihaspura, now called Paraspur, near Shadipur), presents proof of the massive scale of the architecture of the time. He also built towns to commemorate his foreign expeditions. The Martand temple set the model for the Kashmiri Hindu architecture after Lalitaditya. This structure has remained the high watermark of the building art in Kashmir, even as the Taj Mahal is in the domain of Indo-Muslim architecture.

Though due to his military exploits Lalitaditya remained a hero to Kashmiris much after his times, his works for public welfare were no less outstanding. He was the first king of Kashmir to realise that by clearing the bed-rocks and silt at Baramulla, the flow of the Jhelum would be quickened, and the water-level of the river would fall in other parts of the Valley. The blocking passages of the Jhelum were cleared and reclaimed and the continual threat of floods abated considerably. He also constructed a number of irrigation canals. Lalitaditya was fond of wine and women. Once, in a drunken fit, he ordered the beautiful city of Pravarsenpura to be burnt down. His wise ministers managed to save the town by putting haystacks on fire instead. Not satisfied with his military conquests, Lalitaditya set out on new conquests and lost his life during one of these.

Lalitaditya was followed by a succession of weak kings. The power and prestige of the Karkota dynasty were on the wane, until his grandson, Jayapida, ascended the throne, and ruled for thirty-one years, towards the end of the 8th century A.D. He too went on conquering expeditions, defeating the king of Kanauj, among others. He built a city, Jayapura, near modern Sumbal. A patron of art and letters, Jayapida himself studied Sanskrit grammar. Among his ministers was Vamana, one of the two authors of the *Kashikavrtti*, the famous commentary on Panini's well-known Sanskrit grammar.

The following half century witnessed the installations and dethronements of puppet kings. The intrigues of rival factions at the court, which resulted in corruption in high places and oppression of the people, ceased with the coming to power of Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883), who founded the Utpala dynasty. His peaceful and just reign was a period of consolidation, when Kashmir rose once again to great heights in the realms of philosophy, letters, art and architecture.

Bhatta Kallata (pupil of Vasagupta, the founder of the



Spandasasra branch of Kashmir's Shaiva philosophy)—and known as Kavi Ratnakar (authored the *Haravijaya* in fifty cantos) and Anandavardhana (author of *Dhvanyaloka*) were among the great scholars and poets, who enjoyed Avantivarman's liberal patronage. His able engineer, Suyya, following in the wake of Lalitaditya, drained the Valley by having the blocking boulders removed at Baramulla. The town, Sopore (then Suyyapura), which Suyya built on the banks of the Jhelum commemorates his name. Suyya also charged the course of the Jhelum so that it flowed through the Wular lake, thus further relieving the congestion that caused floods.

Avantivarman is well remembered for his founding the city of Avantipura—17 km from Srinagar on the banks of the Jhelum—still called by the same name. Before his accession to the throne, he had built there the shrine of Vishnu Avantisvamin. During his rule, he constructed the temple dedicated to Shiva Avanteshwara. The ruins, adjacent to the Jammu-Srinagar highway, are among the most imposing monuments of ancient Kashmiri architecture, ranking next only to the Martand temple.

Avantivarman's son, Sankaravarman (A.D. 883-902), had to free himself from the pretenders to the throne before he was firmly in the saddle. He led foreign expeditions to Trisarta (the present Kangra) and Gurjara. These expeditions depleted the royal treasury and Sankaravarman resorted to fiscal exactions and plunder of temples. He is ingloriously remembered for introducing *begar*—the system of forced labour—for transport and other purposes, which continued, in one form or another, until the beginning of the 20th century. "From this reign onward, the record is one of a long succession of struggles between the rulers and usurping uncles, cousins, brothers, ministers, nobles and soldiers."

During the century following A.D. 902, the kingship changed hands as many as eighteen times. Tantrine, a military caste of uncertain origin, rose to become a power

that made and unmade kings. Damaras, the landed aristocracy, also had a big say in the affairs of the state. The people of the Valley secured a temporary respite from civil wars during the short rule of Yasaksara (A.D. 939-948), who was elected to kingship by an assembly of Brahmins.

The next monarch, after two kings, was Kshemagupta (A.D. 950-958), who was a debauch. His wife, Didda, daughter of Simharaja, the chief of Lohara, became regent on his death, placing his infant son, Abhimanyu (A.D. 958-972), on the throne. The reins of the state remained in her hands during this and other regency periods, until she ascended the throne herself on A.D. 981. Altogether, she ruled the country for fifty years, until A.D. 1003, wielding power with strength and quashing rebellions with courage and intrepidity. Unscrupulous and licentious, Didda possessed a lust for power which was compounded only by her political sagacity, courage and administrative ability. The Kashmiris still use the term Didda (or Ded) for mother or a lady who is highly regarded.

Her brothers' son, Sagramaraja (A.D. 1003-28), ascended the throne after Didda's death, thus establishing the rule of the Lohara dynasty. The three centuries of the reign of the two Lohara dynasties comprised a period of petty court intrigues, unrelieved by any notable achievements. It was only King Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101), the last king of the first Lohara dynasty, who turned out to be a striking personality. A man of exceptional prowess, he was a curious combination of a poet and a Bohemian *par excellence*. His luxurious living and merry-making bouts caused a huge wastage of the royal treasures. Kalhana, whose father (as noted in the previous chapter) served at the court of Harsha, had witnessed the unseemly happenings for himself, for he observed: "When the end comes for embodied beings, the lamp of their intellect drains quickly to the point of extinction." Harsha was displaced by his brother, Uchala, with the help of the Damaras, the feudal landlords.

Uchala, who belonged to another line of the Loharas,



thus founded the second Lohara dynasty. He was killed by traitors (A.D. 8 December, 1111), and succeeded by his brother Sussala (A.D. 1112-1120). The palace rot and intrigue continued even in the reign of Jayasimha (son of Sussala) during whose rule (A.D. 1128-1155), Kalhana wrote the *Rajatarangini*.

The six reigns following Jayasimha, covering a period of about a century and a half, comprised a further period of decay, marked by a succession of rebellious and internecine disturbances. According to Jona Raja's chronicle, Hindu rule maintained itself in Kashmir for nearly two centuries.

By the time Sahadeva (A.D. 1301-1320) ascended the throne, Islam had entered the Valley and many people had accepted the new faith. A weak-minded king, he fled to Kishtwar when Dulchu, a Tartar chief from Central Asia (said to be a descendant of Chenghiz Khan), invaded the Valley in A.D. 1319. Sahadeva's minister, Ramachandra, assisted by his protege, Shah Mir, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, consolidated the affairs of the state. He was also aided by Rinchin—a fugitive prince from Tibet, who had been Buddhist but had embraced Islam—and Kota Rani, Ramachandra's daughter, who had married Sahadeva. Dulchu's hordes were routed.

Ramachandra assumed the title of king. Rinchin, however, rose in revolt and defeated and killed Ramachandra, thus becoming the first Muslim king of Kashmir. He courted and married Kota Rani, and with her counsel conducted the affairs of the state justly. Shah Mir became his minister, serving him faithfully. Rinchin ruled for three years and died in A.D. 1320, after sustaining some wounds in an uprising led by Udyanadeva, the brother of Sahadeva. Kota Rani then married Udyanadeva, who became the ruler of Kashmir.

Like Sahadeva, Udyanadeva also fled Kashmir, when Achala invaded the Valley. Kota Rani however stayed on and organised a public resistance. Using a clever stratagem, she defeated Achala and killed him. Udyanadeva returned

to the capital, but he was henceforth a king only in name. Kota Rani was the undisputed ruler of the kingdom. She resorted to force to curb warlords and rebellious ministers. When Udyanadeva died in A.D. 1338, she ascended the throne.

Shah Mir, who was biding his time to seize the throne, staged a rebellion after five months of Kota's rule. Though she was assisted by the Lavanya tribe, Kota Rani lost the day after a long-drawn battle. She surrendered and was forced to agree to become Shah Mir's queen and mistress. Being unable to face the situation, she committed suicide, thus spelling the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir.



## EARLY MUSLIM PERIOD

The advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir did not coincide with the introduction of Islam. Bulbul Shah, a Muslim Sufi saint from Turkistan, who visited Kashmir during the reign of Sahadeva (A.D. 1301-1310), was one of the first to propagate Islam in the Valley.<sup>1</sup> The people, who had been groaning under the oppressive misrule and political instability of the later Hindu rulers, abetted by corrupt Brahmins, were attracted towards the simplicity and humane piety of the Muslim divines. The new creed found a fertile soil to grow in (its spread facilitated by the continuing internecine strife among the feudal landlords), and took a firm root in the Valley.<sup>2</sup> (The contribution of Muslim *rishis* to the cultural and spiritual heritage of Kashmir has been dealt with in the chapter on Cultural Heritage.)

In this context, it was but natural that the Kashmiris welcomed the advent of Shah Mir, though he, hailing from Swât, was a non-Kashmiri. He assumed the name of Sultan Shamas-ud-Din (1339-1342), thus founding a Sultan dynasty of Kashmir whose kings ruled Kashmir for 222 years.

- <sup>1</sup> Rinchin, the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir (a convert from Buddhism to Islam), built a mosque which is still extant in Bulbul Lankar, a locality in Srinagar. His grave exists in the same *mohalla*.
- <sup>2</sup> "The shackles of caste had already been broken by the teachings of Buddhism and the general masses of people were slowly but surely converted to the new faith by the Sufi *derveshes* who entered the Valley in large numbers from Persia and Central Asia"—P.N.K. Bamzai: *Jammu and Kashmir*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1973.

During his short reign of three years, he endeared himself to the people, conducting the affairs of the state in a statesmanlike manner, after subjugating the Lavanya tribe to restore complete peace to the Valley.

Among the Sultans who succeeded him, his grandson, Shihab-ud-Din (1354-1373), has been called the Lalitaditya of medieval Kashmir. An accomplished general, he sent his armies on expeditions to distant places in India, Tibet, and Afghanistan, flying victorious banners, and *inter alia*, entering into treaty relationship with Sultan Firoz Tughlaq of Delhi. He added Kishtwar and Jammu to the Sultanate. The king had complete confidence in his two Hindu ministers, Kota Bhatta and Udyashri. Loved at home by his subjects, Shihab-ud-Din established the supremacy of Kashmir in northern India. He built an impressive city on the banks of the Jhelum, naming it Shihab-ud-Dinpura—now called Shadipur. On the foothills of Hari Parbat, a beautiful town was constructed and named after Lakshmi, his Hindu consort.

The Sultan was succeeded by this brother, Qutb-ud-Din (1373-1389), who led a religious and frugal life like his predecessors and continued the policy of tolerance. He welcomed the second visit of the great Sufi savant from Turkistan, Sayyid Ali Hamdani, which was a landmark in the dissemination of Sufism. The king composed some mystic poems under the pen-name of 'Qutb'.

Sultan Sikandar, his younger son, succeeded Qutb-ud-Din. His rule (1389-1413) presented an anti-climax to the previous regime in the persecution of Hindus who were put to the sword by the thousand, unless they accepted Islam; many Brahmins fled the country. Ironically enough, Sikandar was egged on in these fanatic deeds by his minister, Saif-ud-Din, who was a recent convert to Islam, his Brahmin name having been Suha Bhat. Accompanied by posses of soldiers, Saif-ud-Din would visit temples and have them demolished. In this vandalistic madness, the great temples at Martand, Vijayeswari, Sureshwari, etc.—architectural



wonders of Hindu Kashmir—were razed to the ground. No wonder Sikandar has been called *Butshikan* (Sikandar the iconoclast). Be it said to his credit, however, that he remains the first Indian ruler to have abolished the custom of *sati* among the Hindus.

A campaign, led by Rai Magrey, his minister, culminated in Sikandar's mastery over Ladakh. Sikandar could not keep his date with Timur on the Indus (on 25 March, 1399) because Timur had left for Samarqand. He sent his son Shahi Khan (later, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin) with presents to Samarqand. He stayed there for seven years, and got interested in the famous arts and crafts of Samarqand which later proved to be an asset.

Sikandar became famous as the builder of mosques, in many cases using the stones and other materials of the demolished temple structures. Among the mosques he built is the big Jama Masjid in Srinagar. Though hardly a literate, he surrounded himself with men of letters, chiefly from Khorasan and Iraq.

Suha Bhat *alias* Saif-ud-Din, continued as the strong-arm minister in the reign of Sultan Ali Shah (1413-1420), the eldest son of Sikandar. The only event of note in his short reign was the loss of Ladakh. He won the confidence of Hindus by his tolerant deeds and appointed Shahi Khan, his brother, as minister after the death of Saif-ud-Din.

### Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin

Shahi Khan ascended the throne in 1420 and styled himself as Zain-ul-Abidin ('glory of the devout'). The people of Kashmir—Hindus and Muslims—who had already noted his abilities, welcomed his debut as the Sultan. Their aspirations were responded in full measure, the Sultan ushering an era of peace and prosperity for Kashmir. He was deservedly called 'Bud Shah' (great king) which title still persists in folklore, with fond connotations. To ensure stability, he reorganised the army; he cultivated amicable relations with neighbouring countries like Tibet, Azerbaijan, Khorasan,

Turkistan, etc. and sent ambassadors with presents to these countries as well as to the Sultan of Turkey, the Mamluk of Egypt and the Sharif of Mecca.

The enlightened monarch that Zain-ul-Abidin was, he saw to the quick and efficient dispensation of justice. The code of laws, duly revised, was engraved on copper plates and exhibited in public places and courts. Crime was ruthlessly suppressed. "Where Sikandar destroyed, Zain-ul-Abidin restored; where the former banished or killed Hindus, the latter recalled them and exalted them."<sup>3</sup> The Pandits, who comprised the bureaucracy, were encouraged to return to Kashmir and provided every facility, including religious freedom and civil liberties. Thus, the Kaul and Dhar families came from the plains, headed by Pandit Maheswar Nath Kaul and Mirza Pandit Dhar.<sup>4</sup> Zain-ul-Abidin's many administrative reforms embraced revenue assessment which was reduced and land left uncultivated erstwhile was brought under the plough. Numerous canals were constructed and many supplied water to the dry *karewa* lands for the first time. Many bridges were built over the canals; quite a few still exist over the Mar canal, which the Sultan got dug to connect the Dal with the Anchar lake. He laid out gardens at many places, thus anticipating the garden architecture of the Mughal rulers by nearly two centuries.

Eminent Persian and Arabic scholars along with Pandit scholars, well-versed in Sanskrit, adorned the court of Zain-ul-Abidin. He patronised Jonaraja and Shrivara, the famous authors of the later *Rajatarangini*. Some Pandits chronicled the Sultan's reign in *Zaina Charit*. Bodhi Bhatt translated several Sanskrit works into Persian. It was in the Sultan's time that Persian became the language of the court. His

<sup>3</sup> J.P. Ferguson: *Kashmir—An Historical Introduction*.

<sup>4</sup> The late D.P. Dhar, who rose from a minister in Kashmir state to the position of Planning Minister at the Centre, was a direct descendant of Mirza Pandit Dhar and Birbal Dhar, who invited Ranjit Singh to Kashmir.



name will always be written in letters of gold in the annals of Kashmir for his lofty sense of tolerance. He built two temples near Ishabar, the village near which the Mughals later constructed the famous Nishat Bagh.

Having studied the arts and crafts of Samarqand, Zain-ul-Abidin invited master craftsmen from there to train Kashmiris in such crafts as carpet-weaving and papier-maché as well as the manufacture of silk. Kashmiris, who were to acquire unrivalled excellence in these crafts, owe a great deal to the vision of this great monarch. He also patronised musicians and revived the arts of drama and dancing which had languished in the previous regimes. His last years were, unfortunately, beset by a flood and famine, followed by a fratricidal war among his sons. With his death, the power and prestige of the dynasty founded by Shah Mir began to wane. The later kings of the line were puppets in the hands of various powerful clans.

The Sayyids, who had come from Central Asia and Iran, and founded the Sayyid dynasty in Delhi, spilled into Kashmir during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, who respected them as they were reportedly direct descendants of the Prophet. Kashmir came under the political dominations of the Sayyids, during the period following the Sultan's death. The people rose in revolt under one Saif-ud-Din against the Sayyids. Saif-ud-Din became the prime minister of Sultan Fateh Shah I (1486-1493), who tried his best to curb the power of the nobles. Disorder prevailed in the Valley for the next fifty years, worsened by the Shia-Sunni conflicts among the Muslims. The Chaks, a Dardic warrior tribe, had entered Kashmir during Shah Mir's reign. They were Shias and provoked clashes against the Sunnis, the creed prevailing among the majority of Kashmiri Muslims. Kazi Chak, who first ruled the kingdom in the name of a few puppets, became the first Chak ruler in 1561, but was destined to rule only for three years. The Chaks after him showed scant promise of statesmanship. The only credit that history can give them is that they successfully resisted the attempts of

Babur and Humayun to annex Kashmir. When the Shia-Sunni feud again flared up in the closing years of the reign of Hussain (1563-1570), the imperial government at Agra under Akbar tried to intervene in order to bring about order in the state.

The romantic but tragic career of Yusuf Shah Chak (1579-1586) was the penultimate flicker of the Chaks. Married to Habba Khatun, the celebrated poetess, Yusuf Shah changed Gulmarg and Sonamarg into holiday resorts. He tried several ruses to ward off the expanding influence of the Mughals under Akbar, but he finally succumbed to the superior forces and strategy of Akbar's generals. He died in a prison in Bihar. His son, Yaqub Shah, tried to hold on to the throne for some time, but his forces were defeated by the Mughal army, under Qasim Khan, at Haripura. The Mughals entered Srinagar in triumph on 14 October, 1586. Kashmir, losing its independence, became a province of the Mughal empire.



## MUGHALS, AFGHANS AND SIKHS

"Aided more . . . by intrigue than the force of arms", and taking advantage of the Sunni-Shia conflict raging in Kashmir under the Chak Sultans, Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1586. His rule over Kashmir lasted nineteen years, during which period four *subhedars* (governors) administered the province.

A glorious chapter in the history of Kashmir began with the reign of Akbar the Great, the noblest figure among the monarchs of medieval India. His first visit to Kashmir (June 1589) produced some notable results, including encouragement of several industries, particularly of shawls. His finance minister, Raja Todar Mal, who accompanied him, reorganised the revenue assessment so that it fell in line with the system prevalent in the rest of India.

Akbar built Hari Parbat fort in Srinagar on the hill of the same name and the city of Nagar inside the wall that runs round the hill. The huge project gave employment to the people who had suffered during the Chak regime. When the walled city was inaugurated, Akbar participated in the festivities connected with the 'birthday' of the Vitasta (the Jhelum) in the same manner as Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin used to do. The embers of rebellion smouldering amongst the surviving scions of the Chak dynasty were extinguished with the adoption of stern measures. To strengthen his hold on Kashmir, he married a daughter of Shamas Chak. During his third and last visit to Kashmir, Akbar sent an expedition to Ladakh, despite a severe famine in the Valley,

and Ladakh was occupied by Mughal forces. To alleviate the misery of the people, the Emperor sent supplies of grain from Sialkot and Lahore. Akbar's patronage of arts and letters was extended to Kashmir. Mohammad Hussain, an outstanding Kashmiri scholar, adorned Akbar's court.

Akbar was succeeded by his son, Jehangir (1605-1627), who had already fallen under the spell of Kashmir. He and his versatile queen, Nur Jahan, visited the Valley several times to escape the heat of the plains. The Emperor's presence prevented any abuse of power by the governors. Kishtwar—the refuge of the remaining Chaks—was subjugated by Dilawar Khan, one of the governors who is also remembered for gardens and pavilions laid out by him in Srinagar.

A great lover of natural beauty, Jehangir made many pleasure gardens in Srinagar: notably the famous Shalimar (1619) and Nishat gardens, off the Dal lake, and the gardens around the famous springs of Verinag (1620) and Achabal, the last by Nur Jahan. Pari Mahal was built by Dara Shikoh—a son of Shah Jahan—on a hill bordering the Dal lake to house his school of Sufism and an observatory.

Jehangir attended to the welfare of the people. He abolished vexatious taxes and took steps to stamp out the pernicious custom of *sati* which persisted even among some Muslims. In 1627, Jehangir visited Kashmir for the last time, and died on the way back to the plains, his last words being that he wanted "nothing but Kashmir", where he should be buried at Verinag.

Shah Jahan (1627-1658) visited Kashmir four times. Among the nine governors of Kashmir, during his reign, was Prince Murad, who married a Kashmiri nobleman's daughter. One of the *subhedars* who oppressed the people was removed by the Emperor. *Begar* (forced labour) at the harvesting of saffron, which was state monopoly, was abolished. Whenever famine broke out, usually following floods, Shah Jahan organised relief from the Punjab.

An outstanding builder among the Mughal emperors,



Shah Jahan laid out the gardens at Chashma Shahi as well as upper terracing of the Shalimar Bagh, whose beautiful black marble pavilion is a standing monument to the genius of the architect-emperor.

Zafar Khan, one of the governors, conquered 'Little Tibet' (Baltistan), where residuary Chaks had been given refuge. He was a poet. In the preface to a collection of his poems, Zafar Khan mentions a number of Kashmiri poets of the time. Tibet itself was annexed to the Delhi empire on 15 August, 1651, under Ali Mardham Khan, another governor, who is remembered for having built *serais* (rest houses) on the great Mughal road (traversing Gujarat-Bhimber-Shopian) over the Pir Panjal pass.

Aurangzeb (1658-1707), son of Shah Jahan, undid whatever the great Mughals had done in Kashmir by extending to Kashmir his policy of religious persecution. He visited Kashmir only once in 1665. During the forty-nine years of Aurangzeb's reign, Kashmir was governed by fourteen *subhedars*, most of whom carried on the administration well. Iftakar Khan (1671-1675), however, oppressed the Brahmins. Another governor, Ibrahim Khan (1678-1680), could not effectively cope with a serious Sunni-Shia clash, for he backed the Shia sect.

The death of Aurangzeb spelled the disintegration of the Mughal empire. The later Mughals, embroiled in internal dissensions, hardly cared for Kashmiris. Governors appointed by the Mughal emperors would nominate deputies to carry on administration on their behalf. Hindus and Shias were persecuted in the one-year regime of one such nominee, Mir Ahmad Khan (1720).

### **Afghan Rule**

Things came to a head with Ahmad Shah Abdali establishing supremacy over Afghanistan and making successful forays into north-western India. In 1753, he established Afghan rule in Kashmir which lasted half a century. In the words of Sir Walter Lawrence, it was a "a time of brutal

tyranny, unrelieved by good works of chivalry or honour". The Pathan satraps are remembered in the Valley only for their savagery and inhuman treatment of Kashmiris, irrespective of caste or creed. A Persian couplet describing their cruel reign reads: *Sar buridan pesh in sangin dileasi gul chidan ast* (these stone-hearted people thought no more of cutting heads than of plucking flowers).

Under Afghan rule, several of the fourteen governors tried to sever their connection with Kabul and declare themselves as independent rulers. Raja Sukh Jiwan was the first to assert his independence (1754) with the aid of a Kashmiri noble, Abdul Hassan Bandedy. The Kashmiris enjoyed a brief respite, until a severe famine in 1755. A punitive expedition under Nur-ud-Din Bamzai, sent by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1762, ended the career of Sukh Jiwan. Nur-ud-Din became the new governor of Kashmir. During the regime of another governor, Faqir Ullah Khan, the persecution of Hindus and Shias was resumed; a large number of the terror-stricken population of Kashmir left the Valley for good.

Later Afghan rulers vied with one another in inflicting cruelties upon the people, particularly the Kashmiri Pandits, the Shias and Muslim Bombas, a warlike tribe. Governor Asad Khan is said to have tied up the Pandits and drowned them in the Dal lake; a locality on the bank of the lake is still called *Bat Mazar* (graveyard of the Pandits). Mir Hazar, another governor, drowned Shias as well as Hindus. And yet there were interesting secular interludes. Several Kashmiri Pandits were appointed to high posts by Afghan governors. Atta Muhammad Khan, the Afghan governor who declared himself independent of Kabul, issued coins in the name of the patron-saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi, who had both Hindu and Muslim votaries. Considerable advancement took place in the beneficent regime of this governor. He built fortifications at Sopore and Baramulla and constructed a strong fort on the summit of Koh-i-Maran.



Meanwhile, the Sikhs had become a power to contend with and the suzerainty of the Kabul rulers on Kashmir became tenuous. In the governorship of Muhammad Azim Khan, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made an infructuous attempt in A.D. 1814, to invade Kashmir. Azim Khan persecuted Muslims as well as Brahmins who, he thought, had induced Ranjit Singh to attack Kashmir. Mirza Pandit Dhar and his son, Birbal Dhar, who were revenue collectors, conspired to contact Ranjit Singh. Birbal Dhar, helped by Muslim aides, secretly left for Lahore (1818-1819) and persuaded Ranjit Singh to attack Kashmir. The time was propitious as Azim Khan had left for Kabul, along with the major part of Afghan soldiery, and had been succeeded by Jabbar Khan, a mild character. An army, led by Hari Singh Nalwa, Raja Gulab Singh and others, countered Jabbar Khan and his forces at the top of the Pir Panjal with a decisive battle following on the plateau of Shopian, where Jabbar Khan lost the day. Thus, in 1819, ended the tyrannical and rapacious rule of the Afghans. This was also the end of the 500-year Muslim rule in Kashmir.

### Kashmir under the Sikhs

The conquest of Kashmir made an extensive addition to the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and increased his revenues considerably. During the Sikh rule of twenty-seven years (1819-1846) ten governors administered the state, the last two being Muslims. The capital city, called Kashmir during the Muslim rule, was renamed Srinagar.

"The Sikhs," observed Younghusband,<sup>1</sup> "who succeeded the Afghans were not so barbarically cruel, but they were hard and tough masters." It is a historical irony that Birbal Dhar, who had taken the initiative, at considerable personal risk, to invite Ranjit Singh, continued to be a revenue collector at the time of the Sikh governor, Diwan Moti Ram, but was imprisoned on the charge of misappropriation of state revenue and died in prison.

<sup>1</sup> *Kashmir*, p. 142.

Dewan Moti Ram closed down the Jama Masjid at Srinagar to prevent big congregations of Muslims. But Moti Ram was a kind-hearted man. He restored the confidence of the people in the government by several measures—reinforced, during his second tenure as governor, which ended in 1825. Another governor, Dewan Kirpa Ram (son of Moti Ram), erected many fine buildings and laid out pleasure gardens in Srinagar. Fond of boating—his state barges would be rowed by women, wearing jingling bangles—he was nicknamed Kirpa Shron after the sound of paddles. He led a punitive expedition to Muzaffarabad. His commander, Ganesh Pandit Dhar, sowed the seeds of dissension among the hill chiefs and overcame them successfully.

All was not well, however, with Sikh hegemony on the borders of Kashmir during the thirties of the 19th century. Turbulent Afghans drove out the Sikh garrison from Peshawar. Hence the Sikh governors, who had resumed the system of *begar* (forced labour), also levied huge exactions in the Valley, for they needed huge sums of money to keep the hilly districts under check. To produce these funds, a number of taxes and duties were levied, besides land revenue. G.T. Vigne, a French traveller (1835), found Shopian a miserable place and Anantnag "but a shadow of its former self"—these were important trading centres in Mughal times.

Colonel Mian Singh, known in Kashmir as 'Colonel Sahib', was the best of the Sikh governors, from 1833-1841. He reorganised the revenue system, introduced proper weights and had fraudulent middlemen punished. He did his best to revive the trade, industry and agriculture of the Valley. During his regime, the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh took place, followed by a tumultuous war of succession, of which full advantage was taken by Raja Gulab Singh, who had been formally invested as the ruler of Jammu by Ranjit Singh.

Gulab Singh's lieutenant, Zorawar Singh, an able general, conquered Ladakh and Skardu. Zorawar Singh died in



one of the battles in the bleak frontier area of Tibet but before his death he had secured the secession by treaty, ratified by the Chinese and Tibetan governments, of the whole of Ladakh to Jammu.

Gulab Singh's rise to further eminence was aided by the penultimate governor of the Sikh rule, Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din, a Muslim from Jullundur district who had first been employed by Dewan Moti Ram. Mohi-ud-Din opened the doors of the Jama Masjid at Srinagar to win the goodwill of Kashmiris. He helped the 6,000-strong Dogra army of Gulab Singh with the commissariat for the expedition to consolidate Dogra hold on Leh, though the measures (including despatch of 10,00 villagers to transport the army baggage) caused acute distress to Kashmiris. He was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, in 1845.

Meanwhile Gulab Singh, who had integrated himself with the British, was installed, in January 1846, as prime minister of Punjab state by Maharani Jindan. The defeat of the Sikhs proved the proverbial tide in the affairs of Gulab Singh. By the Treaty of Amritsar (16 March, 1846), which was an adjunct to the Treaty of Lahore, signed on 9 March, 1846, between the Lahore *darbar* and the British government, the British made over to Gulab Singh all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies situated to the east of the Indus and west of the Ravi and he indemnified them to the extent of 7,00,000 rupees. Thus Kashmir came under the rule of the Dogras in 1846, after twenty-seven years of Sikh rule.

## KASHMIR UNDER THE DOGRAS

Gulab Singh, the erstwhile Raja of Jammu since 1820, became the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1846. Though he was recognised as an independent ruler, there was an article in the Treaty of Amritsar, according to which he was a vassal of the British and had to pay an annual tribute in acknowledgement of their supremacy.

The 'sale of Kashmir' (Gulab Singh paid an indemnity of Rs 75,00,000 to the British) has been the subject of much comment. From the records of the time, it is clear that the British government was preoccupied with "weakening the Sikh state which had proved itself too strong", and therefore made arrangements by which "Cashmere may be added to the possessions of Gulab Singh, declaring the Rajput hill states with Cashmere independent of the Sikhs of the plains". According to Sardar K.M. Panikkar,<sup>1</sup> Gulab Singh profited from his sustained diplomacy, remaining neutral in the conflict between the British and the Sikhs. "The cession of Kashmir was the price paid for Gulab Singh's efforts to bring about speedy peace which, if he had thrown in his weight with the Lahore *darbar*, would not have been any easy matter to achieve. The ease with which the peace was concluded was due to the agreement reached with Gulab Singh by which Kashmir had already been promised to him." The British were mainly interested in installing Gulab Singh as the nominal ruler of Kashmir because the arrangement provided them a dependable ally

<sup>1</sup> K.M. Panikkar: *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, London, 1930.



in a border region of strategic importance, direct defence of which was an almost impossible task to them at the time.

To gain actual possession of Kashmir, Gulab Singh had to fight it out with Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the last governor. After the Sheikh and his Sikh troops were subdued, Gulab Singh attended to the administration which was in a bad state. He met the leaders of the shawl trade who were heavily taxed in the Sikh regime, and redressed their grievances. He reorganised the revenue and police administration of the Valley. The *begar* (forced labour) system was also reformed. The most important reform was the rationing of rice to the population of Srinagar.

The British government did not leave Maharaja Gulab Singh alone to carry out his enlightened reform programmes. Back home, the empire builders regretted the Amritsar Treaty as a silly blunder. The British functionaries in India tried to pressurise Gulab Singh into accepting a British Resident at his court, so that they could have a say in his frontier affairs. Ultimately, a special British officer was posted at Srinagar. Maharaja Gulab Singh, however, remained the master of the state and suppressed a rebellion in the frontier outposts of Chilas with an iron hand, though his general did not succeed in Gilgit, and the territories to the right of the Indus were lost. In February 1856, Gulab Singh installed his son, Ranbir Singh, as ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. His achievement—the only Indian ruler to have extended the frontiers of India to their natural boundary—lay behind Gulab Singh,<sup>2</sup> as he took voluntarily to a secluded life.

Ranbir Singh (1857-1885), who had already been trained in the arts of peace and war, proved a worthy successor to

<sup>2</sup> "When Ranjit Singh died in A.D. 1839, Gulab Singh was easily the most influential personage in the Sikh empire and was its chief feudatory. In the years that followed (A.D. 1840-1842), he conquered Baltistan and western Tibet, and added to the geographical boundaries of India an area such as no ruler in the past had ever done . . ."—K.M. Panikkar, *ibid.*

the ruler of the largest princely state of India. Like his father, Ranbir Singh, attempted to introduce a number of reforms in the administration of the state.

A patron of arts and letters, Ranbir Singh encouraged research and collected a good library of Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts. An era of modernism in education was ushered in through the opening of schools. The Raghunath temple at Jammu—the complex is a landmark—and other temples bear testimony to his zeal for Hindu religion. In a sectarian disturbance, when Shias were attacked and looted by the Sunnis, he gave adequate compensation to the victimised Shias. The Maharaja was “liked by the people”.

Despite nagging interference from the British in the frontier affairs of Kashmir, Maharaja Ranbir Singh's forces reconquered Gilgit and the principality was permanently annexed to Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925), the eldest son, succeeded Maharaja Ranbir Singh on his death in 1885. Immediately a Resident was appointed by the British and the Residency established in Srinagar. The British, having already annexed the Punjab, were anxious about the frontiers of India. In 1889, the British conspiring with the Maharaja's brother, Amar Singh, deprived the Maharaja of his powers and appointed a Council of Regency, under the Resident, to administer the state. The Gilgit Agency advanced the British imperial interests in Gilgit, and Hunza and Nagar were conquered, all in the name of the Maharaja. In 1905, the British relented at last and restored the powers of the Maharaja.

Several progressive reforms were, however, carried out with the active help of the Resident, who controlled the administration. An executive council of five members was established in 1924 by the Maharaja who was the president. Reforms were undertaken in the judiciary and the revenue system. Many works of public utility were undertaken. Colleges and hospitals were opened in Srinagar and Jammu. New roads were opened, among which the roads linking



Jammu and Rawalpindi, respectively, to Srinagar, were great feats of engineering skill. Jammu and Srinagar were connected by telephone. The railway line was extended from Sialkot to Jammu. The house-boats, which were to become so many focal points of tourist interest, were first made in the Maharaja's time as the improved version of the indigenous *doonga* boat. The salutary results of these measures were that the Kashmiris shed their seclusion and more European and Indian tourists started visiting the Valley. Tourism, becoming more popular, benefited boatmen, traders, artisans and craftsmen. Sericulture was organised for the first time on a commercial basis.

Raja Hari Singh, nephew of Pratap Singh and the son of his younger brother, Amar Singh, became the ruler on Maharaja Pratap Singh's death in 1925, as the Maharaja had no son. Hari Singh had already been the Commander-in-Chief of the state forces since 1915. During the First World War, he looked after the training and equipment of the state forces which were sent to the western front.

His religion was 'justice', announced the new Maharaja at his coronation in Jammu in March 1926, celebrated with pomp and eclat. He attended the *l'd* prayers of the Muslims at Srinagar. These popular gestures turned to be short-lived as the Maharaja came under the influence of court favourites, losing contact with the people. The state borders were sealed to prevent infiltration of political ideas from the rest of India.

The Muslim press, centred in Lahore, let loose a spate of propaganda against the Maharaja, who, it was alleged, was keeping the Muslim majority in serfdom. The Anglo-Indian press egged on by the British policy of 'divide and rule' was not far behind in denouncing the Maharaja. On 13 July, 1931, the Muslim population of Srinagar rose as one man in a mammoth demonstration against the excesses of the state forces. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who had resigned his job in protest, led the movement for the right of democratic self-rule. How the Dogras, who manned the

administrative services, refused to see the writing on the wall and the movement for freedom progressed, under the aegis of the national struggle in India, is well known. In 1932, the Maharaja, however, announced freedom of the press and platform, as recommended by the Glancy Commission.

The British who had already invested themselves with the civil and military administration of Gilgit (under the Political Agency), secured the area on 29 March, 1935 on a sixty-year 'lease'. The British no more pressurised the Maharaja after he had toed the line vis-a-vis their frontier policy in Gilgit and adjoining territories. He was given a free hand to deal with the political agitators vexing him, the British for once refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of the state.

Though the movement for responsible government was led under the auspices of the Muslim Conference, presided over by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, it did not assume a communal character, which would have been inconsistent with the cultural traditions of the Valley. On 8 May, 1936 Sheikh Abdullah appealed to the Hindus and Sikhs to participate in the meetings demanding 'responsible government' for the people. As was to be expected, the nomenclature of the Muslim Conference was changed to National Conference in June 1938. The struggle for democratic rights thus became broad-based, embracing the different communities and classes of Kashmiris. In October 1938, the National Conference made a 'national demand' for a legislature freely elected through adult franchise.

While the Maharaja's government made a feeble response by throwing some seats of legislature open to election, the old Muslim Conference received a new lease of life from the redoubtable leader, M.A. Jinnah, and his Muslim Conference. The 'Quit India' movement, launched in India by the Indian National Congress in 1942 against the British, evoked a similar struggle in Kashmir (in May 1946) against the Dogra hegemony. The demand for transfer of



power was suppressed with an iron hand during the prime ministership of R.C. Kak. Jawaharlal Nehru, then president of the Indian National Congress, rushed to Kashmir, where he was arrested (for a day) by the authorities. Characteristically, Jinnah decried the movement as an "agitation carried on by a few malcontents . . ."

Another landmark was the visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Kashmir in July 1947. By that time the British had announced the transfer of power to Indians. Gandhiji was impressed with the communal amity he found in Kashmir. While the events in India were moving fast to the climax of independence in India, the Maharaja removed R.C. Kak from office. The people looked up to the National Conference and its leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, to give them a lead in the matter of accession of the state to India or Pakistan, on which the Maharaja was dragging his feet.

## INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

The secular ideals of the National Conference had been nurtured under the umbrella of the All-India States' Peoples Conference which was the extension of the Indian National Congress to the princely states. The British government announced the scheme of the partition of India on 3 June, 1947. During the period between 17 June, 1947, when the Government of India Act was passed, and 15 August, 1947, when India became independent, the ruler of a princely state could enter into a standstill agreement with either or both of the independent dominions, India and Pakistan. The Maharaja of Kashmir, flirting with the idea of independence, entered into a standstill agreement with Pakistan, who honoured it more in the breach than in the observance. Finding the Maharaja hesitant in obliging, Pakistan engineered a massive raid into Kashmir by her tribal people on 22 October, 1947.

The story of that invasion, and how the raiders' triumphant march towards Srinagar was stemmed by the timely intervention of the Indian Army, is well known. The National Conference, the premier political organisation of the state, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, opposed joining the Muslim dominion of Pakistan, and urged the Congress leaders to accept the accession of the state to India, subject to the consequent ratification of the Act by plebiscite. The identity of secular and other ideals of the Congress—and its offshoot, the All-India States' Peoples Conference—as also the political kinship that Nehru



and Abdullah had developed over the years, prompted them to take the fateful step, that linked the destiny of Jammu and Kashmir state with the rest of India. The instrument of accession of the state to India was signed by Lord Mountbatten, the Governor-General on behalf of the Indian government, by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for the people of the state, and by Mehr Chand Mahajan, the prime minister of Kashmir who represented Maharaja Hari Singh. As for the Maharaja, he left Srinagar on the advice of Lord Mountbatten during the tribal raid, never to return to the capital.

Fighting continued in Kashmir. Dead set against the invaders, the people of Kashmir had already organised themselves into a national militia under G.M. Sadiq. With the help of the Indian Army and imbued with secular ideas, they fought in defence of their land with courage and determination. On 1 January, 1948 India submitted a formal complaint to the Security Council under Chapter VI of the UN Charter "as India was anxious to avoid a direct conflict with Pakistan". Ultimately, the ceasefire followed on 1 January, 1949 disconcerting the Kashmiris who wanted finally to clear their land of the tribal marauders, but they honoured the trust that India had reposed in the UNO.

Following the ceasefire, Pakistan refused to honour international agreements to vacate its aggression. The people of the state set up the Constituent Assembly in 1951, elected on the basis of universal adult franchise, and presided over by G.M. Sadiq. On 6 February, 1954, the Assembly ratified the accession of the state to India. The new Constitution came into force on 28 January, 1957. When the Assembly had passed the Bill of Accession, Sheikh Abdullah declared: "Naturally, if we accede to India there is no danger of a revival of feudalism and autocracy. Moreover, during the last four years, the Government of India has never tried to interfere in our internal autonomy. This experience has further strengthened our confidence in them as a democratic state."

Since then Pakistan has been in illegal occupation of a large chunk of the state territory (so-called 'Azad Kashmir' but directly administered by the Pakistan government). Pakistan has used all sorts of tactics—incitement to communal disturbance in Kashmir and the rest of India, infiltration of armed personnel into Kashmir and even wars of 1965 and 1971—to undo the accession of Jammu and Kashmir state to the Indian Union. That Kashmiris, fired by the zeal of patriotism and secularism, presented a united front to the aggressor from across the border on each occasion, is well known.

In the successive administrations of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, G.M. Sadiq and Mir Qasim, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, followed by the chief ministership of his son, Farooq Abdullah, the state made progress on political, economic and cultural fronts along with the rest of the Indian Union.

Assessing the progress achieved so far in different fields of development since Independence, the state has undoubtedly stepped into a new era, advancing towards establishing a democratic and socialistic order within the broad framework of Indian polity. Delimitation of constituencies (thirty in Jammu province and forty-five in Kashmir province, including Kargil and Ladakh) paved the way for free and fair elections held in 1998. A dynamic process of closer integration with the Indian Union, brought about by a series of legislations, including the extension of the jurisdiction of the Central Election Commission and the Supreme Court to the state, and with the state coming within the ambit of Central planning in the 1950s, unfolded new vistas of economic and social progress for the people. The programme of revolutionary agrarian reforms, envisaged in the 'New Kashmir' plan, was implemented step by step. Land reforms were implemented, canals dug extensively, and a network of roads built all over the state. The produce per hectare rose to about Rs 502 compared to the all-India average of Rs 470. Education was made free from the



primary to the postgraduate classes. Expenditure on the health of each state resident increased from 47 paise in 1947 to Rs 13.57 in 1979. Power generation increased manifold—from 4 megawatts in 1947 to 209 megawatts in 1979. The state's income more than doubled, from about Rs 55.54 crores in 1950-51 to Rs 123.70 crores in 1970-71; it rose to Rs 166 crores in 1979-80.

These are but a few indices of the all-round progress that the state has made since Independence, which, as many international observers have pointed out, is in sharp contrast to the part of the state still illegally occupied by Pakistan, and thus justifying the conviction and optimism with which the people are working to build the Jammu and Kashmir state of their dreams, as a proud constituent of a progressive, dynamic and prosperous Indian republic.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

Remarkable for the solidity, elegance and durability of its monuments and possessing an unbroken historical record from the hoary past to the present day, Kashmir has the added attribute of having been a seat of learning from ancient times. "For upwards of two thousand years, Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small Valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy," observed Sir George Grierson.<sup>1</sup> Mentioning that Kashmiris have reason to be "justly proud of the literary glories of their land", Sir George added that Kashmir was "for centuries the home of the greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Shaivism . . ."

### Vogue of Sanskrit

The idyllic surroundings of the Valley provided a congenial soil for the growth of Sanskrit. "Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born and wrote in the Valley, and from it has issued in the Sanskrit language a world-famous collection of folklore."<sup>2</sup> Sanskrit became the language of religion, culture and knowledge in Kashmir soon after the immigration of Indo-Aryans. In Asoka's time, when Buddhism was established in the Valley, the texts and commentaries on the new religion were written in Sanskrit (in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. II, Part 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts)<sup>3</sup>, contrasting with the ones written in the rest of India in Pali. The Chinese scholar-travellers, Hiuen Tsang and Ou-kong, visited Kashmir to study Sanskrit texts.

The 6th-century king of Kashmir, Matrigupta,<sup>4</sup> was himself a poet and patron of learning. Among the best literary critics of ancient India, Bhamaha, who lived in the beginning of the 8th century A.D., wrote *Kavyalamkara*, the earliest work of poetics (*alamkara*) which has come down to us. Udbhatta, the court poet of Jayapida, defined forty-one types of speech in his *Alamkarasamgraha*. Udbhatta's contemporary was Vamana, another writer on poetics, who also adorned the court of Jayapida. The fame of Anandavardhana, who lived during the rule of Avantivarman, rests principally on his treatise on the science of poetics.

Kashmir became the land *par excellence* of the Shaiva faith—based on the principles of idealistic monism (*advaita*)—which was founded by Vasugupta towards the end of the 9th century A.D. His teachings are now lost, but Somananda, Abhinavagupta, Utpala and others wrote works and learned commentaries on Shaivism, explaining its doctrine and dogma, and on the *Gita*. The philosophy of the Tryambaka School, popularly known as the *Trika Shastra*—the threefold science—is peculiar to Kashmir, even as the saffron is and from the Valley it spread to other parts of India. "Abhinavagupta's *Tantra Loka* and *Pratyabijna-Virmarsini* though acclaimed to be mere expositions of *Pratyabijna-Sutra* by Utpala, are original works of very high merit," says P.N.K. Bamzai.<sup>5</sup>

According to Dr B.N. Pandit, "Kashmir Shaivism is the only philosophy which can inspire us for both material and

<sup>3</sup> The Sharda was a script developed by Kashmiri scholars. Based on the Devanagri script, the Sharda was adopted by the Tibetans in the 9th century A.D. for their language, as they had none of their own.

<sup>4</sup> Some scholars have tried to identify Matrigupta with Kalidasa; the reasons adduced are, however not fully convincing.

<sup>5</sup> *A Short History of Kashmir*.

spiritual progress."<sup>6</sup> Abhinavagupta (A.D. 933-1015) was a prolific writer and a versatile genius—poet, critic, philosopher and saint—who wrote more than forty books, some of which exist. As a litterateur and grammarian, he carved for himself a unique place of honour in Indian aesthetics, extended over a quarter of century.

The course of studies of Kshemendra, a pupil of Abhinavagupta, embraced all the arts and sciences then known in India. A many-sided scholar like Abhinavagupta, Kshemendra wrote poems, narratives, didactic and satiric sketches and treatises on rhetoric and prosody. He made a notable contribution to fable-literature with his *Brihatkathamanjari* in which he preserved for posterity the lost classical work of Gunaditya, credited to be the earliest story narrator of the world. In *Samayamatyrka*, one of his most original poems, albeit, a landmark in social satire, he described the arts and wiles of the harlot. The *Kathasaritasagara* (the ocean receiving rivers of stories from different sources) by his contemporary, Somadeva, is a collection of stories based on the Kashmiri version of Gunaditya's *Brihatkathamanjari* and an important landmark of world folklore, insofar as it contains most of the stories of *Panchatantra*.

Mankha wrote his famous poem *Srikanthacharita*—narrating a Puranic legend of Shiva—between the years A.D. 1135 and 1145. A dictionary called *Mankakosha* is current in Kashmir. Other celebrated writers in Sanskrit are Bilhana, Shambhu, Jalhana and Kalhana. Of these, Jalhana and Kalhana were the prized luminaries at the court of the second Lohara dynasty. Kalhana is famous for the *Rajatarangini*, the celebrated chronicle of the kings of Kashmir, which he composed between the years A.D. 1049-50. "A literary production of high merit," the chronicle is, according to Dr Sunil Chandra Ray<sup>7</sup>, "an admirable collection of historical facts presented in an illuminating garb of poetry and soars in the region of fine art." A contemporary of

<sup>6</sup> *Aspects of Kashmir Shaivism*, 1978.



Kalhana, Ruyyaka authored *Alamkarasarvasva*, a standard work on figures of speech.

### Varied Contributions

Kashmir stood out as a great centre of Buddhism about two thousand years or more ago. From the 4th century A.D. onwards, the Valley was an important province of the Mauryan empire. In Asoka's time, the province secured special attention: according to the *Rajatarangini*, he had 500 monasteries built in the Valley. Kashmir became the metropolis of Mahayana Buddhism in the reign of Kanishka and after. The commentaries of an historical assembly of Buddhist divines and theologians were deposited by Kanishka in a monastery near Srinagar. In the words of Dr Radha Kumud Mookerjee, "These valuable records may still exist buried near Srinagar and may be unearthed by some archaeological excavations in the future." Scholars and pilgrims came from distant lands to study Buddhist texts at the feet of learned Pandits of Kashmir. Chinese sources mention Kashmiri scholar-monks—among them, the famous scholar and philosopher, Kumarajiva—who travelled all the way to China and South-east Asia, to spread the message of Buddhism. Princes of Kashmir like Guna Varma (A.D. 452) became Buddhist monks to propagate the new gospel in distant lands.

Thus, Kashmir's contribution to Indian thought and literature—via Sanskrit—was immense. "The people of Kashmir," wrote Hiuen Tsang (he was in Kashmir around A.D. 631), "love learning and are well cultured. For centuries, learning has been held in great respect in Kashmir." Bilhana observed in the 11th century: "In every household, even women speak Sanskrit and Prakrit as gracefully as their mother tongue." Between 6th and 12th centuries, scholars from all parts of India flocked to the land 'of the goddess of learning'. It was at Sharda-peeth—the name is

<sup>7</sup> *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, 1969.

still current—in Kashmir that Sri Shankara started his meteoric career of preaching, after he paid obeisance to the goddess, Sharda, enshrined in the temple.<sup>8</sup> The contribution of Kashmir to literary and dramatic criticism, and to dance and music literature, by a succession of authorities from King Jayapida's time to that of Samgramadeva (A.D. 1235-1252), the immortal story books by Kshemendra and Somadeva, the important chronicle of Kalhana and other historical writings that preceded and followed him—notably Jonaraja, Shrivara, Prajyabhatta and Shuka—are recognised all over India. Similarly, in medicine, Kashmir contributed a lot with the writings of Pribhabhatta and Udbhatta. The exclusive recessions of important classics like the *Mahabharata* and Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* by Kashmiri commentators are yet another feature of Sanskrit learning in Kashmir. Other Sanskrit works were also critically commented on: for instance, the *Yudhisthiravijya*, the premier *kavya* of Vasudev Bhattatiri (of Kerala), was the subject of commentary by Ranakantha of Kashmir. Then, there was also a two-way concourse between Kashmir ('the land of Sharda'—the goddess of learning) and the rest of India. The ancestors of a number of celebrated writers and philosophers of Kashmir came from India—from Ganda (Bengal), Kanyakubja, etc. This went on until the last days of the Hindu rule, when minor works continued to be written.

### Sufis and Rishis

The advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir was marked by peaceful dissemination, though fanatic iconoclasts held the field occasionally in later times. The missionaries of the new faith mostly belonged to one or the other order of Sufis from Persia and Bukhara. The confluence of Mahayana Buddhism and Islam in some parts of Persia and Central Asia has resulted in the evolution of the school of Islamic

<sup>8</sup> The custom persists among Indian Brahmins of the south: they prostrate in the direction of Sharda-peeth, in Kashmir, before studies are formally commenced.



mystics, the Sufis, who founded several orders: some like the one founded by Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, branching out into a kind of pantheism after a mutually beneficial concourse with Hindu and Buddhist philosophies.

In Kashmir, the Islamic teachers found a fertile soil for planting the seed of the creed from Arabia. Buddhism had already broken the rigours of the caste system and it was an easy task for the Sufi divines (from Persia and Central Asia) to convert the masses to Islam. The meeting together of two great traditions—of Shaivism, the Hindu monistic philosophy of Kashmir, and of Erfan, 'wisdom of the Quran'—gradually took place, giving rise to a unique order of Islamic *rishis*<sup>9</sup> whose philosophic beliefs led to the ideal of religious tolerance and a shared faith in God, always cherished by the Kashmiris. The comforting wisdom, mostly versified by these *rishis*, in Kashmiri, the language of the masses, provided solace to the people in the none-too-few periods of economical and political chaos.

### Persian Scholars

The Persian language came to Kashmir with the advent of Islam though Persian words had already started percolating into Sanskrit vocabulary. The general adoption of Persian, however, followed after a century, during the reigns of Sultan Sikandar and Zain-ul-Abidin. Sanskrit had continued until then in the Sharda script; a few tombs of the period bearing inscriptions in Sanskrit testify to its continued use. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin made Persian the court language; himself a poet, he wrote the *Shikayat* in Persian, and surrounded himself with a galaxy of poets. The transition was not irksome as Sanskrit had already ceased to be

<sup>9</sup> "The most respectable people of Kashmir are the *rishis* who, although they do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions, are doubtless true worshippers of God. They revile not any other sect and ask nothing of anyone. . . They abstain from flesh. . . there are thousands of these *rishis* in Kashmir."—Abu'l Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

the language of the common man who had taken to the vernacular Kashmiri, evolved through several centuries.

The Kashmiri scholar took to Persian, the classical language complementing his mild temperament and refined taste, as the fish takes to water. Learning the court language was also essential for the Brahmins to maintain their position as government officials. Thus it came to pass that Hindus, who had made Kashmir the 'high school' of Sanskrit learning, vied with Muslims in making a lasting contribution to Persian literature. Mulla Ahmad completed a Persian translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, under the benign patronage of Zain-ul-Abidin who valued the products of both the languages. A later Sultan, Haidar Ali, composed songs in Persian. Among the Chak Sultans, Yusuf Shah was the most learned. The Mughal rule provided a further fillip to the Persian language. Mazhari Fani, Mulla Tahir, Ghani, Salim, Auji, Fitrati, Furughi, Majmi, Nafi, Taufiq, Guya, Juya, Sarfi and Yakta are the poets enumerated by Dr G.M.D. Sufi.<sup>10</sup> The most outstanding among the important poets of Kashmir was Mulla Muhammad Tahir Ghani. Born in A.D. 1630, the third year after the accession of Shah Jahan, he died young at the age of thirty-eight but he attained recognition early in his career. In fact, his age represented the glory of Persian poetry in Kashmir. A critic assessing his *Divan*, consisting wholly of odes, observed that Ghani "brought forth pearls that were worth buying with the cash of life".

The Kashmiri poet, affected equally by the beauty of style and thought of Persian literature and splendour of the natural phenomena of the Valley, readily took to Persian ways of expressing his emotions. Persian poetry in Kashmir has been divided into three periods: pre-Mughal, Mughal and post-Mughal, and Afghan. Starting with direct imitation of Iranian scholars, it evolved gradually into using local idioms and metaphors, attaining such literary heights

<sup>10</sup> *A History of Kashmir.*



that Kashmir came to be called *Iran-i-Saghir* ('Little Iran'). The Kashmiri Pandit, who had earned the title of *pandit* in the early history of India for his high proficiency in Sanskrit, also distinguished himself in Persian. Dr Sufi gives the names of Pandits Narayan Kaul, Chandra Bhan, Lachhman Ram, Narayan Das, Bhawanidas Kachru, Raj Kaul Arzbegi, Shankar Joo Akhun, Tabak Ram Turki and others as "great intellectual worthies of their motherland". Among these, Pandit Raj Kaul Arzbegi flourished in the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In Maharaja Pratap Singh's time, Dewan Kirpa Ram wrote the *Gulabnama* (a history of Gulab Singh) in Persian, which has been acclaimed as a fine piece of Persian literature.

### Origin of Kashmiri

The population of Jammu and Kashmir—a multilingual state—can be divided into three distinctive linguistic groups. Inhabiting the Kashmir Valley and some adjoining areas, the Kashmiris speak Kashmiri. The second group, living in the Jammu region speak Dogri. The mother tongue of the third group, Ladakhis, inhabiting the frontier district of Ladakh, is Ladakhi, a language close to the Tibetan. By and large, Kashmiri is the most important language of the state—duly recognised as one of the regional languages of the Indian Union. Besides the languages mentioned, Urdu, Balti, Dardi and Pahari are listed among the principal languages of the state.

Spoken by the aborigines of the Valley, Kashmiri was originally a branch of the Prakrit language or one of the Prakrits of Sanskrit. With the admixture of words and phrases from the many dialects spoken on the borders of the Valley, Prakrit assumed the form of a new vernacular, Kashmiri. Several European scholars and Kashmiri philologists have adduced the theory that Kashmiri is an off-shoot of the Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit language. That the Dardic language, intermediate to the Iranian and Indo-Aryan, or the Aryan branch of the Indo-European languages is closely

connected with Kashmiri, was established by the researches of Sir George Grierson.<sup>11</sup> Kashmiri is the only language of the Dardic-Aryan group that has a rich literature. That Marco Polo referred to Kashmiri by name shows that it is a fairly old spoken language. It was, however, never recognised as a medium of culture and administration. The languages of the elite and/or administration, down the ages, in the state, have been Sanskrit, Pali, Persian, English and Urdu.

Kashmiri literature goes back about six centuries, when the indigenous script, Sharda, was developed. There is evidence that manuscripts in the Sharda script were written on the bark of birch trees. The *Nilamatpurana*, which is a significant source of the history of Kashmir, bears testimony to this fact. Lal Ded, the poetess sage of the 14th century, also known as Yogeshwari Lalla, is credited with giving Kashmiri her native tongue, which led to its becoming a written language. The indigenous script, Sharda, already evolved, was akin to the Bodh script of Ladakh, and the Takri of Kishtwar, though closer to the latter script.

The poetic form of *vaakh* (Sanskrit, *vakhya*), a four-line stanza, was current by the middle of the 14th century A.D. Lal Ded improved the *vaakh* to the standard of a composite metric form that came to stay. Her mystic *vaakh* quatrains attained instant popularity and were mostly communicated by word of mouth. The lasting contribution of Lal Ded's *vaakh* is that these helped to make Kashmiri an adequate vehicle for the expression of philosophical thought. In fact, her verses are placed by critics as "the earliest specimen of

<sup>11</sup> According to late Prof. S.K. Toshakhani, then chief editor of the Dictionary Committee of the J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Kashmiri had a Vedic and even pre-Vedic base. He averred, with etymological proofs, that Kashmiri is even closer to East European languages, like Lithuanian, than the Dardic-Aryan languages. He conceded that Kashmiri may have had some exchange of vocabulary with the Dardic group but Kashmiri does not share the *matra* or its basic vocabulary with these languages.



modern Kashmiri", despite her use of Sanskrit vocabulary and archaic expressions.

The earliest extant work in Kashmiri—in Sharda script—is *Mahayanaprakash* by Rajancha Citi Kantha. It is a treatise on the Trika (Shaiva) philosophy, written towards the end of the 13th century A.D. Other works in this, what may be called, old Kashmiri, are Bhattavatara's *Banasuravadha*, Ganaka Prashtasa's *Sukhadukh-charitam*, and probably excerpts from several *Trika Darshana* texts in Kashmiri. Typographically, Sharda—with twenty-nine consonants and thirteen vowels, comprising long, short and very short sounds—stood somewhere between Brahmi and Devanagri. Whatever the original form of Prakrit, through which Kashmiri derived its affinity with Sanskrit, it is difficult to say, but the basic, strong link with Sanskrit stayed, though with the advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir in the 14th century A.D. came strong linguistic influences in the form of Persian and Arabic vocabularies.

Despite the cultural invasion of the Valley following Muslim rule, Kashmiri survived as a distinct language due to some favourable historical and other factors. The Persian language had a rich philosophical grounding like Sanskrit—there was broad identity in the approach to the soul and God, specially manifested in the Sufi and Shaivist creeds—and its exponents were not otherwise exclusive so long as Persian was adopted as the court language. The idyllic symphony of Kashmir's incomparable landscape had a softening effect on the foreign elements who were assimilated in the rich cultural milieu of Kashmir. All the same, as Kashmiri thinkers and writers were attracted more and more towards Persian literature and took to writing in Persian, Kashmiri became practically a spoken language, and the Sharda script went into gradual disuse.

Kashmiri is a very musical language because of the large number of vowels and the absence of harsh consonants. The sweetness of the language, however raw otherwise, has made for the preservation of the poems from early

days by a song-loving people committing them to memory and passing them down, from one generation to another.

The growth of the Kashmiri language, though fitful and uneven, will be traced in the following pages, through contribution to it by well-known writers and poets from the medieval times to the present day.

### Lal Ded

In the annals of Kashmir the 14th century stands out as one that produced a number of saints and seers, as well as an enlightened monarch like Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who has been rightly described as the Akbar of Kashmir. Sidh Bayu, the Shaiva *yogi*, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi, popularly known as Nund Rishi (called Sahajanand by Hindus, and revered by both Hindus and Muslims as the patron-saint of Kashmir), Lalla, the poetess-sage (affectionately called Lal Ded or Lalamoj, Mother Lalla, by all Kashmiris) and Shah Hamdan, were the saints who left a lasting impress on the religious and cultural milieu of Kashmir.

Lalleshwari (that was Lal Ded's real name) was born in a Brahmin family in village Pandrethan, near Srinagar, in the sixties (or seventies) of the 14th century A.D. She is the first saint-poetess of Kashmir whose thoughts have come down to our time. In socio-economic terms, hers was a period of political uncertainty and economic distress, and her domestic life—married off at the age of twelve to a country bumpkin who cared little for her spiritual sensibilities, and subjected to the whims and caprice of a formidable mother-in-law—added in no small measure to the dreariness around her, turning her extremely sensitive mind from the 'phenomenal' to the 'real'. Oblivious to her surroundings, she tore up her garments, and roamed up and down the Valley in a semi-naked state. She came into contact with the Muslim saint, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, popularly known as Shah Hamdan, who had sought refuge in Kashmir from persecution in Hamdan (Persia). Legend has it that to cover her body before the great mystic, she plunged



into a baker's red-hot oven and emerged thence dressed in silken robes to have a discourse with him.

Lal Ded was probably influenced by the Sufi philosophy through Shah Hamdan. In any case, she sought and found the basic truth permeating the outwardly incongruous cults and faiths—Brahmanic pantheism and Islamic monism, Shaivism and Sufism—and gave it the best exposition in her poems which came down as her *vakhya*<sup>12</sup> by word of mouth until the early years of the present century, when these were recorded. The *vakhya* were not songs as Grierson called them. They were not meant to be sung like *Gurubani*, the hymns of Guru Nanak, as Prof. J.L. Kaul has pointed out but were, in his words, "weighted with thought, subtle and deep, and do not have any musical quality as such".<sup>13</sup> In the words of Prem Nath Bazaz,<sup>14</sup> "Lal Ded, like the Buddha, preached her doctrines in the idiom of the masses, and not in high-flown Sanskrit, the vehicle of expression used by all the scholars and the educated classes of her time. Her message is meant for one and all . . . she desired to shake the people out of their mental torpor. Her objectives were philosophical revolution and cultural renaissance on a countrywide scale." Eulogising Lal Ded in this vein, Prem Nath Bazaz calls her 'the harbinger of a new age'.

The utterances of Lal Ded, couched in the popular idiom of her time, reveal her struggle towards self-realisation, how she transcended desires and temptations:

<sup>12</sup> These *vakhya* were collected and translated by Sir Aurel Stein and Sir George Grierson towards the end of the 19th century. Dr Dional D. Barnett and Richard Temple rendered them into English verse. In the present century, Pandit Anand Kaul, Prof. J.L. Kaul and Sarwanand Charagi—all of them Kashmiri writers—brought out further editions containing Lal Ded's sayings, thus continuing the preservation of this unique literature for posterity.

<sup>13</sup> *Lal Ded*, Prof. J.L. Kaul, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1973.

<sup>14</sup> *Daughters of the Vitasta*, Prem Nath Bazaz, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1949.

O embodied one, dote not upon your body thus,  
 Embellishing it, adorning it,  
 Providing luxuries for it;  
 Even its ashes will not endure. (Tr. J.L. Kaul)

In her quest for the absolute, Lal Ded spurned idols:  
 Idol is of stone, temple is of stone,  
 Above (temple) and below (idol) are one,  
 Which of them shall thou worship, O foolish Pandit?  
 Cause thou the union of mind with soul.

Lal Ded preached eternal truths that are common to all faiths, in a language that struck the deepest chords in the minds of the people, Hindus and Muslims alike:

Passionate with longing in mine eyes,  
 Searching wide, and seeking nights and days,  
 Lo! I behold the Truthful One, the Wise,  
 Here in mine own house to fill my gaze.  
 That was the day of my lucky stars,  
 Breathless, I held Him my guide to be. (Tr. Temple)

The *vakhya* of Lal Ded brought about a veritable intellectual revolution in Kashmir. Unreservedly denouncing useless rituals, blind dogmas and caste prejudices, Lal Ded said:

The sun shines at every place,  
 It does not reach only fertile lands,  
 Thus the wind enters into every house,  
 Hardly, in sooth, is Shiva to be found,  
 Meditate therefore on the doctrine.

Her mystic ideas in consonance with the wisdom of the *Bhagvata Gita*, Lal Ded stressed the importance of securing freedom from desires:

Having been born, I sought neither wealth nor power,  
 I did not like desires and enjoyments,  
 I considered moderate food enough,  
 I bore pain, poverty patiently, and loved my God.



Recent research, specially that of Prof. J.L. Kaul, has sifted the uncritical or overzealous additions which were made to the *vakhya* of Lal Ded from time to time. Out of the authentic *vakhya*, thus retrieved, what is remarkable is the manner in which she established the secular tradition of harmony and tolerance—the priceless heritage of Kashmiris—and, however indirectly, it contributed to the glorious era of mutual good relations among Hindus and Muslims during and after the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. Acclaimed equally by Hindus and Muslims, Lal Ded's teachings have permeated the life of Kashmiris, and her sayings, even though couched in archaic Kashmiri, continue to be quoted by them.

### Nund Rishi

A contemporary of Lal Ded, with whom she had mystic rapport, Nur-ud-Din or Nund Rishi, was the first Muslim saint of Kashmir to assume the title of Rishi. Propagating tolerance and respect for other religions, he is still remembered for his pithy sayings and maxims. His shrine at Chrar, where *Nur-Nama*, the collection of his writings, is preserved, attracts pilgrims, Hindus and Muslims. Known to the Hindus as Sahajanand (his real name before his conversion to Islam when he adopted the name, Nur-ud-Din), Nund Rishi was born in A.D. 1377, in a village near Bijbehara, and belonged to the same family as the Rajas of Kishtwar.

Severing family ties, even as the Buddha did, Nund Rishi lived in a cave, performing severe penance for twelve long years. He is remembered for some of his prophecies, like:

There, in those halls dazzling with glitter of nobles and  
lords,  
Where, even the great were refused permission to  
enter,  
Where I saw *houris* singing and dancing,

Or dusting them with brooms made of yak's tail,  
 Now, there I have seen cotton being grown,  
 O, Nasar, I have seen better, thou goest and seest for  
 thyself.

When Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali (as Muslims called him) died at the age of sixty-three, it is said that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin *Badshah* (great king) attended the funeral procession and gave expression to the loss that Kashmiris had suffered. The inspiration that Nund Rishi provided to Kashmiri thought, language and literature continues and every year Kashmiris throng to his shrine at Chrar-i-Sharif—as the *ziarat* is called—and sing his immortal verses.

### Habba Khatun

Whereas Lal Ded was the first and supreme exponent of the mystic experience in Kashmiri poetry, the most traditional impulse of love and song, deep-rooted in folk literature, again came from a woman, two centuries later, in the charming person of a poetess-queen, Habba Khatun. She and her successor, Arnimal, were the precursors of the romantic movement in Kashmiri poetry. Their songs, remarkable for melody and spontaneity, expressed the deep craving of the heart and the soul—a refreshing departure from the classical style of their predecessors.

Born in village Chandahar, off the Srinagar-Jammu road, in the picturesque countryside celebrated for saffron fields, Zooni (that was her maiden name) was a precocious child, and learnt the Quran and Persian classics. Her fame spread but her father, scared by it, had her married off to a peasant who lived in the nearby village, Ledpore. The gifted girl burst into song which her illiterate husband did not appreciate. He and his parents found Zooni no good as a helping hand in farming. What had a housewife to do with airy songs, they would taunt her? "Out of the conflict of her early married life was born that nostalgic and melancholy strain in her songs that came to be characteristic of not



only of her poetry, but of all the poetry of this period," (Prof. J.L. Kaul). Her lyrics, which were a far cry from the mystic verse of Lal Ded, bore the inimitable stamp of spontaneous bird-song. Her songs spilled beyond the village confines and reached the capital city of Srinagar.

One day while she was singing on a terraced paddy field, she caught the eye of Prince Yusuf Shah, who fell in love with her. He asked her who she was. She replied in a quatrain. He knew that she was Habba Khatun, the name that had been given to her by the sage of Pampur, Khwaja Masud. The Prince arranged for her divorce, and married her. After the death of his father in A.D. 1579, Yusuf Shah ascended the throne of Kashmir. Habba Khatun, the queen, became the royal patron of arts and letters. She and her royal consort, Yusuf Shah Chak, founded Gulmarg, the 'meadow of flowers', when they discovered this upland, flower-spangled meadow in one of their tours of the Valley. No wonder Habba Khatun has been called the Nur Jahan of Kashmir.

Habba Khatun is remembered more as a singer of songs than as a queen who advised the Sultan on all matters of state, and was a source of strength to him. She sang of love in its many moods. One of her popular love-lyrics runs thus:

The distant meadows are in bloom  
Hast thou not heard my plaint?  
Flowers bloom on mountain lakes  
Come, let us to mountain meads;  
The lilac blooms in distant woods,  
Hast thou not heard my plaint?

*Lol* lyric is the typical verse form that was popularised by Habba Khatun. A passion-laden complex of love and yearning, pining for what is not attained in the path of love, 'Lol' is a Kashmiri word, difficult to translate. A short, melodious lyric, expressing a single complete mood, the *Lol* lyric runs into six to ten lines, including the refrain. Here is

one of Habba's well-known lyrics:

Come, friends, let us to banks and braes,  
 to gather yellow-flowered dandelions;  
 Silently and stealthily,  
 without a word of warning, he did  
 steal away from me.  
 Dear, come, O come to me!  
 They know it all, they know,  
 and now talk ill of me,  
 In rumour and in gossip rude,  
 When will the tangled web of fate unravelled be?  
 Dear, come, O come to me!

The even tenor of the royal romance was disturbed by social events—communal disturbances between the Muslim sects of Shias and Sunnis of Kashmir. The Mughal Emperor, Akbar, intervened by sending a strong army which took Yusuf Shah prisoner. The melancholy of Habba Khatun's lyrics took on a poignancy, tinged by a passionate rebelliousness:

In henna, I dyed my hands,  
 When will he come to me?  
 O come and still my craving,  
 See, how I am dying for thee.  
 Without thee how shall I fill my days?  
 How can I endure thy absence, Love?  
 Say, Friend, when will Fate smile on me,  
 And my Love come to me again? Say, when?

The poetess-queen who had spanned the Jhelum at Srinagar with one more bridge—it is still named Habba Kadal after her—was distraught, pining for the release of her consort from captivity. But who would help her against the will of the Emperor? The Mughal governor of Kashmir issued a warrant for her arrest. The order was withdrawn when he was told that she lived like a *faqir* (mendicant.)

After two years of custody at Lahore, Yusuf Shah was



awarded a *jagir* in Bengal by Akbar. He died soon after. The news reached Habba Khatun and it stunned her. She then composed what might have been her own epitaph:

I came of peasant parentage,  
I made a name as Habba Khatun,  
I passed through crowds, drawing tight my veil,  
But people flocked to see me,  
And even the ascetics hurried out of woods,  
To catch a glimpse of me.

The *Lol* lyrics of Habba Khatun, and her successor, Arnimal, survive to this day, sung to the accompaniment of *saz* and *santoor*, not and *tumbakhnari*—musical instruments which the Kashmiri musicians have made their own. Even illiterate peasants in the remotest corners of the Valley sing Habba Khatun's lyrics—soulful expressions of the joys and pangs of love and the sorrow of loss and bereavement. To mark her death anniversary, a celebration is held yearly at her tomb.

### Arnimal

Appearing on the poetic scene of Kashmir about two hundred years after Habba Khatun, Arnimal carried on the *Lol* lyric tradition of her predecessor. Born in the 18th century, Arnimal fashioned the *Lol* lyrics into plaintive wails, poignant and melancholic. Like Lal Ded and Habba Khatun, Arnimal's family life was unhappy—contributing to the poignant pathos and the recurring note of resignation to fate in her poems. Though she was married to Munshi Bhavanidas, a well-known Persian poet, Arnimal was deserted by him and lived mostly in her father's home, where she would be spinning yarns and lyrics:

Murmur not, my spinning-wheel,  
Thy straw-rings I will oil.  
From under the sod, O hyacinth,  
Raise thy stately form;  
For, look, the narcissus is waiting,

With cups of wine for thee,  
Once faded, will the jasmine bloom again?

Never letting her frustrations harden into hate, Arnimal would seek blessings for her philandering beloved, while addressing her plaint, to her girl-friend:

Friend, whom can I tell?

My rivals laugh at me since he is no longer on speaking terms with me.

Yet may he live long and give joy to my rivals!

The thought that he is happy and well sustains me still.

*Arni* is the wild pale yellow rose, found in the countryside of the Valley. *Arnimal* literally means 'a garland of *arni*'. She is said to have woven her name deftly into one of her romantic poems:

I was a full-blown summer jasmine,

but for him I've turned as pale as the *arni*-rose,

Say, friend, when will my love come unto me? Say when?

The romantic poems of Arnimal constitute a watershed in the development of Kashmiri poetry. After her, there was a creative spurt in Kashmiri, notably in the form of epic poems, biographical and folk literature including fables. Poems on mysticism and romantic themes were also composed from 1819 to 1880. Epics like the *Ramayana* by Prakash Ram, romances like *Shirin Khusro* by Mahmud Gami, *Gulrez* by Maqbool Shah Kralawari and tragedies like *Akanandun* by Waliullah and Saif-ud-Din, belong to this period. The epic renderings by Paramanand typify the literary achievements of this period.

### Mahmud Gami

Born (1765) during the Pathan regime, Mahmud Gami lived through the Sikh era of Kashmir, and died in 1855, nine years after the Treaty of Amritsar, which ushered the Dogra



rule in Kashmir. He stands out among the poets of his day by the fact that almost all of his output was in the Kashmiri language.<sup>15</sup> During his long life, he became famous for his narrative, romantic poems *Shirin Khusro*, *Yusuf Zulekhah* and *Laila Majnun*. He also versified in Kashmiri the histories of *Mahmud Ghazni* and *Haroun Rashid*.

The *ghazal* was Mahmud Gami's forte. His lyrics dealt with *Sufiana* (Sufi) and love themes, the latter predominating. The love lyrics of Mahmud Gami were reminiscent of the passionate longing contained in the verses of Habba Khatun and Arnimal. According to Abdul Azad,<sup>16</sup> Gami's *Sufiana* poems did not scale any great poetic heights. He, however, mentions that a series of articles entitled 'Mahmud Gami's Yusuf Zulekhah' appeared in a German magazine in A.D. 1895 through the good offices of one Colonel Frederick Burkhard, who had obtained a copy of the Kashmiri manuscript in Kashmir. Azad also credited Gami, along with Rasul Mir, with having deeply affected the evolution of Kashmiri poetry.

### Rasul Mir

The 19th-century poet who shares with Mahmud Gami the honour of being the father of the Kashmiri *ghazal* (the lyric form of poetry) is Rasul Mir. Like Gami and Habba Khatun, Mir also sang of earthly joys and sorrows, the love that enthralled the common folk and motivated their uneventful lives. He also wrote some mystical verse.

Rasul Mir is remembered for his innovation in the style of love songs. In the *Lol* lyrics of Habba Khatun, Mahmud Gami and others, the love plaint is addressed by a woman, usually to a girl-friend. Rasul Mir reversed this trend, in giving expression to the lover's side: he depicts the

<sup>15</sup> *Kashmiri Language and Poetry*, Vol.2, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 1962 (an Urdu publication). In 1964, The Academy published a treatise, in Kashmiri, on Mahmud Gami by Ghulam Nabi Khayal.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

prejudices of the beloved which explain why the lover looks woebegone. Borrowing freely from the Persian and Sanskrit languages—the mellifluous metaphors *et al.*—Rasul Mir's poems exploited to the full the musical potential of the Kashmiri language, and produced *ghazals*, remarkable for their sweetness of diction. No wonder then that Rasul Mir became the favourite of musicians, and Rasul Mir Day is yearly celebrated in the Valley on 24 October.

### Parmanand

The early 19th-century poet Parmanand was intensely spiritual and left a lasting legacy. Born about 1790, in a village near Mattan (the well-known shrine on the way to the Amarnath cave), Nand Ram (his real name) succeeded his father at the age of twenty-five as a *patwari* (revenue collector). The socio-economic realities: the excesses perpetrated on the people during the Sikh rule were too much for him, compounded as these were by an unhappy family life, because of his shrewish wife. Well-versed in Persian on the one hand and the Vaishnava lore on the other, and knowing some Sanskrit, Parmanand took refuge in philosophising in verses like:

Ferry me across, somehow, or else shall I sink in the  
world ocean.

I am sick of asking Thee again and again,

Once for all I ask Thee now, and Thou too once for all  
grant my prayer.

Fed up with his work at the revenue department, he resigned his post as *patwari* after fifteen years of service. The profound sayings of Lal Ded and the study of the *Bhagvata Gita* and the *Upanishads* buoyed him up until the realisation came to him that true spirituality lay in rising above the illusion of *maya* and not merely being other-worldly. He effected the synthesis of Sufism with the Vedanta, which has been "a glorious trait in the cultural development of Kashmir", (Prof. P.N. Pushp). What was needed was the



'realisation of the *sahaja*'—the 'inborn truth'. According to Parmanand, the *Rasa Lila* of life is incomplete until man dives deep into the ocean of joy and emerges triumphant over the distinction of 'sour' and 'sweet' and soaks his self in the spirit. Convinced of the futility of conventional yoga which is not suffused with genuine faith and devotion, Parmanand sang of the 'yoga of love' in epic episodes like the *Radha-Svayamvara* and *Sudama Charita*—works which retain their popularity to this day, along with his composition *Shivalagun*.

It was typical of Parmanand and his time that Hindus and Muslims, Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris, admired him to the point of adoration. His followers held him in high esteem until his demise at the ripe old age of eighty-eight. His disciples, Lakshman, Prakash Ram and Krishna Das, carried on the vogue he had started, their lyrics also studded with a large number of Persian and Sanskrit words, and synchronisation of Sufism and the Vedanta philosophies.

### **Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor**

With the emergence of Ghulam Ahmad 'Mahjoor' as a poet of wide and popular appeal in the early twenties of this century, Kashmiri literature entered a period of creative, poetic revival. When Pirzada Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor died on 9 April, 1952, Kashmir lost the greatest poet of the century: one whose poetry had inspired generations of men and women for the best part of four decades.

Born on 3 September, 1885 in Mitragam village, about 37 km from Srinagar, Ghulam Ahmad received poetic inspiration from his father, Pir Abdullah Shah, who was a Persian scholar. Determined to write in his own mother tongue, Mahjoor used the simple diction of the folk. Among women poets of Kashmir, he esteemed and emulated Habba Khatun, and in 1926, he modelled a poem (that became instantly popular) after her celebrated song *Posh-e-mat-i-janano*. His poem 'The Flower of Nishat Bagh' became

popular throughout the Valley. When recognised by Rabindranath Tagore, the Kashmiri bard's fame spread beyond the Vale of Kashmir. He emerged from the '*gul-e-bulbul*' (flower and the bird) phase to take an active interest in social and political affairs. His poetry increasingly epitomised the struggle of Kashmiris for self-government, typified by the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The Kashmiri was 'deep drunk' with the unhappiness that came with centuries-old poverty and misrule. Much earlier than other bards, Mahjoor sang:

The *bulbul* hankers after flowers,  
The *bambur* (bee) after the narcissuses,  
(But) the Kashmiri is deep-drunk . . .

The dead weight of tradition, in the form of resignation and introverted contemplation, persisted. Mahjoor could not speak out. Still, he said:

I should have been outspoken but for the fact  
that the fault-finder is ready,  
to jump at any word (from my lips),  
I fain would closely watch thy path,  
But they, I knew not who are keeping  
a strict eye over my gaze;  
(albeit) I am told they are going to  
invigilate over the opinion 'lurking' in my mind.

Among the poets of the 'New Kashmir' period, Mahjoor ranked as the greatest in the love of his motherland. The poet of the Kashmiris sang:

Who is the friend and who the foe of your native land?  
Let you among yourselves thoughtfully make out . . .  
The race and stock of all Kashmiris is one;  
Let us mingle milk and sugar once again,  
Hindus will man the helm and Muslim ply the oars,  
Let us together row (ashore) the boat of this country.  
To usher in the new era of Kashmir, described as 'New





Ancient Kashmiri architecture can be glimpsed in the imposing ruins of Avantivarman's temple at Avantipura, 17 kms from Srinagar.



Tall and well-built with prominently Jewish features, the Gujjar or herdsman tends to sheep and cattle in the hilly regions.



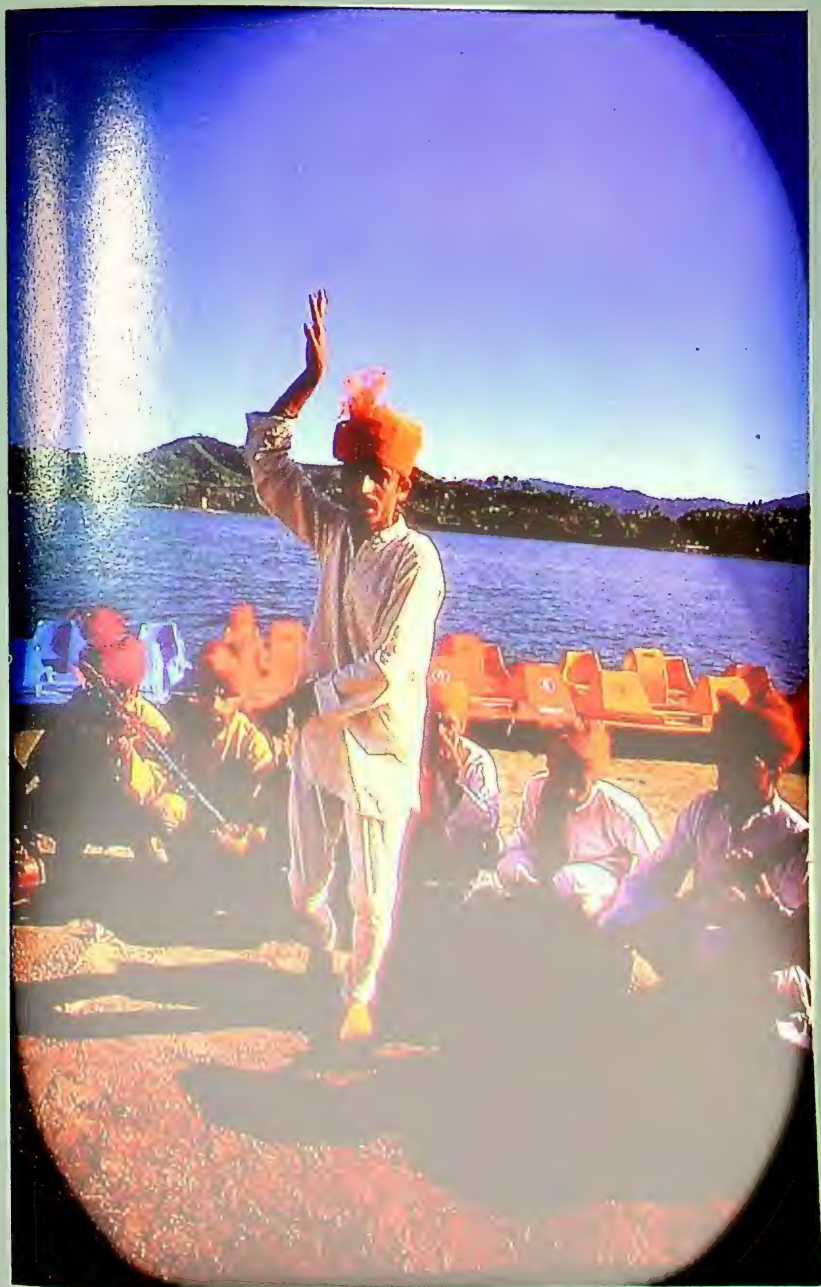


Kashmiri women in their *pheran* (loose robe) and headgear love to bedeck themselves in silver jewellery, which further enhances their natural beauty.



Papier-maché artefacts and enamelled brassware reveal the craftsmanship of Kashmiri artisans.





The Kashmiris celebrate their festivals with pomp, show and gaiety.



The Valley of Kashmir attracts trekkers and mountaineers from all parts of the country.



The Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu is dedicated to Goddess Shakti and is perched atop a hill some 45 kms away from Jammu city.



Kashmir', the poet sounded the clarion call:

If thou shouldst awaken the habit of flowers,  
 Away with *zir-o-bam*—the musical instrument,  
 Bring about an earthquake, raise a storm, thunder  
 aloud and let loose a flood.

When the tribals from Pakistan invaded the Valley of Kashmir in 1947, Mahjoor sang dolefully:

The man-eating wild vultures (of the hilly tracts) pound-  
 ed and killed innocent creatures without number.

Land reforms highlighted the reconstruction programme in Kashmir when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah formed the government. And Mahjoor gave vent to the joy of the liberated peasant who would, at long last, own the land he tilled:

The period of tyranny and exploitation is over,  
*Waddars* and *chakdars* (landlords) have lost their land,  
 We have just got this happy news.

Mahjoor showed his keen awareness of the changing times in poems like '*Wolo hao baagvano*' (Come, O gardener!) and '*Gulshan vatan chu sonny*' (Our land is a garden).

### Abdul Ahad Azad

When I witness ups and downs, banks and demarcations,  
 I lose my temper,  
 I seek oneness and equality, for these I run and foam  
 and fret.

These are a few representative lines from the poem '*Daryiaav*' (River) by Abdul Ahad Azad (1903-1948), who was a junior contemporary of Mahjoor, and was influenced by Mahjoor as well as the passionate Kashmiri *ghazals* of Rasul Mir and Mahmud Gami. Promoting himself from the stage of singing praises of the 'tresses and mole' of the beloved, he became a fervent advocate of the revolution which came to Kashmir in 1947, but he did not live long to

see the glory of the 'New Kashmir' that he had visualised; he died prematurely on 4 April, 1948.

Azad's poetry—his forte was *ghazal*—did not reach the maturity that Mahjoor's did but even then it left an impress on Kashmiri literature all its own. Cast in the mould of a rebel (early in his teaching career he was deeply influenced by Marxist thought), Azad decried "a thousand wiseacres pretending to have known God". As he put it: "Azad dedicated himself to man; neither to the mosque, nor to the temple." Evaluating his contribution, Prof. P.N. Pushp observed: "His whole poetry is, in fact, a mighty crusade against fanaticism, communal prejudice and national fads."<sup>17</sup> He quotes Azad for "taking to task the poet of the old school who had opiated the people's minds with his morbid music." This land has nurtured in its lap worthy sons like Budshah.<sup>18</sup> Should its progeny die of hunger on the way-side?

The water that vitalised Kalhana, Ghani and Shafi,  
Should that very water be poison for me?

Azad's complete works in Kashmiri, collected assiduously by Dr Padam Nath Ganju, were posthumously published in 1967 by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages. The Academy also published Azad's monumental book, *Kashmiri Language and Poetry*, written in Urdu in three volumes.

### Abdus Sattar Asi

A people's poet in the real sense of the word, Abdus Sattar Asi (died in 1950) lived to see the realisation of his dream of 'new Kashmir' come true. A milkman by profession, Asi studied Hafiz and Sadi in his boyhood and translated into Kashmiri two of Iqbal's poems, '*Shikwa*' and '*Jawab-i-Shikwa*'.

<sup>17</sup> *Kashmir*, Government of India, Information and Broadcasting Ministry fortnightly, 1 August, 1951.

<sup>18</sup> *Budshah*—the 'great monarch', as Kashmiris called the 15th-century king of Kashmir, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.



Asi blossomed into a poet, after his fruitful contact with Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor. In the late thirties and forties, Asi voiced the growing socio-political consciousness of peasants and workers. In a poem, he ironically praised the 'blessings' of poverty; in others, he exposed the game of exploitation of the 'tyrants' of the people. He addressed himself to his countrymen to rise to the occasion, when the raiders attacked Kashmir in 1947:

See that thus dost not  
     put to shame my blood;  
 Beware, the wolf is out  
     to pounce on thee.

Patriotism tempered by humanism, as personified by Mahatma Gandhi, appealed to Asi. Grief-stricken at Gandhiji's assassination, Asi sang:<sup>19</sup>

O, India's life, bereft of thee  
     the country is lifeless;  
 O India's pride, bereft of thee  
     the country is desolate . . .  
 Alas! He who strove to resuscitate a garden in ruins,  
     has lost his life while laying it out.

### Zinda Kaul

The winner of the Sahitya Akademi award for Kashmiri (in 1956, the first time an award was given for a work in Kashmiri), Master Zinda Kaul (1884-1966) ranks with Mahjoor and Nadim among the outstanding Kashmiri poets of the 20th century, who have left an indelible mark on the content and form of Kashmiri literature. Popularly known as 'Masterji', Zinda Kaul was seeped in *Vedanta* and Shaivism, and as such, unlike Mahjoor, uninvolved in socio-economic realities of his day. The mystic in him believed in 'the true, the good and the beautiful' (just as

<sup>19</sup> Translated by the late Prof. P.N. Pushp in *Kashmir, Publications Division's fortnightly*.

Tennyson did) and transcendental eternity.

Seldom has Kashmiri lyric risen to such heights of ethereal imagination as in Zinda Kaul's poem '*Vadihe Manush*' (Man would Weep), which he penned after he had suffered personal tragedies, in the deaths of his wife and his eldest son.

Writing some of the finest *ghazals* in Kashmiri, Zinda Kaul could nevertheless voice almost robust optimism, envisaging a Utopian society for his countrymen, where:

Robbery is not in league with loot  
The poor are not crushed . . .  
Where people read, sing and play  
Where children weep not . . .  
Remembering God with love and prayer  
In the city of peace and love  
Shall man attain spiritual heights.

Essentially a mystic poet, who saw the divine in everything, Zinda Kaul could describe the changing panorama of nature in its gorgeous setting in the Valley in inimitable quatrains. Expressing wonder at the manifestations of the Creator, he held that true worship expresses itself through the love of mankind:

The heart within man is a priceless ruby,  
And God is the luminosity of love  
In one who has a human heart!

Assessing Zinda Kaul's contribution to Kashmiri literature, Prof. A.N. Raina picks<sup>20</sup> the poem 'Helplessness' as "the masterpiece of his depth of feeling and search which makes it a soliloquy, interrogating and wandering for an answer which is not easy to find". Among other numerous admirers, Mahjoor acknowledged the

<sup>20</sup> Zinda Kaul, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (in *Makers of Indian Literature* series), 1974.



greatness of Zinda Kaul:

Let my song rise high  
And attain the hue of sky . . .  
And long live Zinda Kaul!

### Dina Nath Nadim

Listening in to a talk from Radio Kashmir by Dina Nath Nadim on 19 April, 1975 it was interesting to hear him deplore in chaste Kashmiri, and yet in gentle satire, the loss of old cherished values among Kashmiris. In the fifties, he was "the most popular Kashmiri poet of full-blooded youth and vigour", and earlier, in 1947, at the time of the Pakistani raid, one of the leading organisers of the new cultural movement that spearheaded Kashmir's literary renaissance. Also, Nadim was responsible not only for revolutionising the content of Kashmiri poetry, but for making significant experiments in technique and recreating the vogue of writing lullabies and labour-chants.

Born in 1916, Dina Nath Nadim became a teacher in a private high school. He staunchly supported the radical agrarian reform of giving 'land to the tiller'. His was the conviction that the peasant,

with his plough-share every year  
writes a new destiny upon the Mother Earth's brow.

Always rising above narrow considerations of caste or creed, religion or parochialism, Nadim reminded the peasant:

Thou hast to tame the wild flow of mighty rivers . . .  
Thou hast to do away with drought  
And inhabit the dreary wastes.

In Nadim's famous poem '*Vanan von-nam*' (The Wind Spoke to Me), distinguished like the rest of his poetry by felicity of expression and freshness of treatment, the wind, in summing up, says to the poet:

One was the slogan of the garden:  
'Kashmir is ours  
and Kashmir's bright future is ours'.

Nadim died in 1988. He spoke or wrote nostalgically of the good old days but he was optimistic about the great future of Kashmiri literature. His contribution by way of introducing some new styles in Kashmiri poetry ensured him a lasting place in Kashmiri literature.

### **Mirza Arif**

A scientist turned poet, Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg, better known as Mirza Arif, has covered the entire span of Kashmir's economic and political transition from Dogra monarchy to new Kashmir. Defining his mission as a poet, he wrote in the course of a letter to Prof. P.N. Pushp: "A poet must be aware of the consequences of whatever he utters and must not only be an interpreter of life, but also its critic. He must dedicate himself to the cause of humanity at large and propagate it..." Living up to his profession, he penned humorous quartets which comprise his matchless contribution to the Kashmiri poetry of today, and which took in all manner of subjects from the exploitation of the poor by the vested interests to the war songs, lauding the heroism of people who withstood the onslaught of the raiders from Pakistan in 1947.

The humanism of Mahatma Gandhi struck a sympathetic chord in the heart of Arif. When Gandhiji visited Srinagar in early 1947, Arif paid him a warm tribute. And, when Gandhiji fell to the bullets of an assassin he wrote an eulogy with a heavy heart:

Who has pulled the flower to shreds?  
... The sky is rent asunder...  
Where has my darling gone, unseen?

The martyrdom of Maqbool Sherwani at Baramulla invigorated the resistance movement under the leadership of the late Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, and Arif



transmitted the martyr's 'message' from the grave:

Sacrifice nurtures the seeds of life,  
Never shall we submit to foreign domination  
Kashmir will shine as India's crown;  
With it lies the remedy for India's ills . . .

Arif's close involvement with social ills continued though he was proud of what had been achieved for the common man in Kashmir since Independence.

### Recent Trends

Kashmiri poetry and other literature of the post-Independence era are a welcome product of the new forces unleashed by the struggle for political freedom, and its aftermath. As a result we notice, as observed in the excerpts presented, the modern poet, since Mahjoor concerned himself less with versification of love and romance, and more with social realities and facts of life. The National Cultural Front which was set up under the leadership of G.M. Sadiq, after the Pakistan-inspired raid on Kashmir, provided a historic impetus to resurgence in the field of art and literature. Writers,<sup>21</sup> poets, playwrights, painters and musicians appeared on the scene with their timely contributions which were well received in Kashmir and the rest of India.

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages was established in October 1958 under the provisions of Article 146 of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution. Mirza Kamal-ud-Din worked as its first secretary; the learned patron then was Sadar-i-Riyasat, Dr Karan Singh. The scope of the work of the Academy was widened when the late Prof. Jaya Lal Kaul became its secretary in 1963. The Academy was declared an autonomous body and its activities spread throughout the state.

<sup>21</sup> The present writer belonged to the group and wrote a number of stories and articles on the raid, how Kashmiris rose as one man against the invaders. One of the stories was developed by Vishnu Prabhakar into a longer Hindi story.

The Academy has published a number of works by old Kashmiri authors which were either in the archives or in private collections. Among these books is Abdul Ahad Azad's monumental work, *Kashmiri Zaban aur Shayiri* (Kashmiri Language and Poetry) in three volumes (with able introductions by Prof. Ali Jawad Zaidi and Mohammad Yusuf Taing); selected poems in Kashmiri by Dina Nath Nadim, Habba Khatun, Haqqani, Maqbool Shah Kralawari, Paramanand, Rasul Mir, Wahab Parey and Lakshman Kaul. The Academy also published selected poems of mystic poets (Swach Kral, Niama Saab, Rahman Dar, Ahmed Batwari, Shah Gafoor, Shah Qalander, Shams Faqir, Rahim Saab, Wahab Khan and Asad Parey) in two volumes which were edited by Amin Kamil and entitled *Sufi Shaeyir* (Sufi poets).<sup>22</sup> The Academy published *Kashur Sargum* (Kashmiri Music) by Sheikh Abdul Aziz in two volumes, in which he gave, for the first time, scientific notations to *Soofiana Kalam*, the Kashmiri classical music. The former secretary of the Academy, Mohin-ud-Din Akhtar, a keen observer of men and manners, has written perceptive stories on the social life of Kashmiris. He won the Sahitya Akademi award of 1957 for his collection, *Sat Sangar* (Seven Peaks). His two novels *Soozal* (Rainbow) and *Dod Dag* (Pain and Anguish) represent Kashmiri prose at its best. Another secretary, Mohammad Yusuf Taing, has ably edited a number of works of the Academy. Another prose work, *Kashur Nasrechi Kitab* (Book of Kashmiri Prose) earned Professor Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Hajini (b. 1917) the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy award in 1961. Other Academy awards have gone to Sufi Ghulam Mohammad for *Loosmaty Tarak* (Faded Stars—Sketches and Stories), to Banshi Nirdosh (*Bal*

<sup>22</sup> P.N. Bazaz: *Kashmir in Crucible*, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1967 (chapter entitled 'Progress in Cultural Fields'). For up-to-date information, the writer is obliged to the Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, who had presented him about eighty works of the Academy in Kashmiri, Urdu, Dogri and Ladakhi languages.



*Marayu* (I die Frustrated—a collection of short stories), and to Muzaffar Azim for *Zolana*, a collection of poems.

Another Sahitya Akademi award-winner,<sup>23</sup> Professor Rahman Rahi (b. 1925) has published *Sana Vani Saz* (Captivating Music) and *Subhuk Soda* (Morning Joy), in 1955 and 1956, respectively. He has also to his credit collections of children's stories in Kashmiri—yet another innovation testifying to the resurgence of the Kashmiri language, a resurgent departure in a literature that was dominated by poetry. Among other contemporary writers in Kashmiri may be mentioned Ghulam Nabi Firaq, Nandalal Ambardar, Mohammad Amin Kamil (editor of the *Sheeraza*, journal of the Academy), Ghulam Ahmad Mushtaq, Shambhu Nath 'Haleem', Avtar Krishen 'Rehbar', Ghulam Nabi 'Khayal', Ghulam Nabi Baba, Ghulam Rasool Nazki, Prem Nath Premi, Ali Mohammad Lone, Dina Nath Almast, Moti Lal Saqi, Chaman Lal Chaman, Radhey Nath Masarat, Makhan Lal Mahow, Fazil, Rasa Jawdani, Aisha Mastoor, and many others.

The folk literature, available in Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi, Gujarati and Punjabi, has been collected and published by the Academy. It has also published a Kashmiri-Kashmiri dictionary, besides Kashmiri-Urdu, Dogri-Hindi and Dogri-Dogri dictionaries. Its multilingual quarterly journal, *Sheeraza*, is issued in Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. Two schools of music and fine arts were started in 1964, at Srinagar and Jammu, to impart scientific training to students in painting, classical music and dramatics.

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, besides its other activities, undertakes the printing and publication of books in the regional languages of the state, like Dogri, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Kashmiri and

<sup>23</sup> The 1975 Sahitya Akademi award for Kashmiri was won by Ghulam Nabi Khayal for a collection of essays, entitled *Gasshir Munnar*; the award for Dogri (poems) went to Krishan Smailpuri for his publication *Mere Dogri Geet* (My Dogri Songs). Earlier, Khayal had received a State Akademi award for the same work.

Ladakhi, etc. The Academy has brought out more than 300 publications in these languages so far.

The Academy has undertaken the publication of ninety-two books in Dogri, which include the collection of poems by various poets, translations, one-act plays and the like. The Academy has issued for the first time collection of Dogri proverbs and idioms in two volumes under the title *Dogri Kahavat Kosh*, *Dogri Mahavera Kosh*, *Dogri Bhasha aur Vyakaran* and the *Introduction to Dogri Literature and Pahari Art*, respectively. Twelve volumes each of Dogri folk-songs and Dogri folk-tales have also been published.

The Academy has issued eleven volumes of Hindi anthologies under the general title *Hamara Sahitya*, which include its special volumes devoted to the study of folk literature and comparative writings in various languages of the state. Hindi versions of Dogri and Kashmiri folk-songs and folk-tales have also been published in separate volumes. The complete works of poet Dutt, with a critical introduction, have also been published. The selected versions of Rasul Mir and Lal Ded have also been issued in Hindi.

The Academy has published several anthologies of prose and poetry containing the writings of Punjabi writers of the state. Translations of select Dogri and Kashmiri short stories, folk-songs and folk-tales, have also been published in this language.

The *Abhinandan Granth*, a commemorative volume, was brought out on the quintcentenary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev. Punjabi versions of Sahitya Akademi award-winning *Sumran* of Master Zinda Kaul, *Kashmiri* and *Neela Amber Kale Badal* (Dogri) by Narendra Khajuria, have also been published. The *Sada Sahitya* has been published in eight volumes. This includes special volumes on Punjabi poetry in Jammu and Kashmir and on folk literature.

The Academy has also published *Nukatt-o-Ruqatti Ghalib*, a collection of letters and articles by Ghalib, and, a commentary on Ghalib's compositions under the titles



*Tafseer-i-Ghalib* and *Intikhabi-i-Urdu Adab. Diwan-i-Meer*, a rare, authentic manuscript preserved in the library of Raja of Mahmoodabad (UP), forms the basis of this *Diwan*. *Nai Hissiyat aur Asari Urdu Shayari* is a study in depth of the latest trends in Urdu literature. Besides, thirteen volumes of *Hamara Adab*, and eight volumes of *Urdu-Kashmiri Farhand* (dictionaries) have also been published.

The functioning of the All India Radio stations in Srinagar and Jammu has greatly helped in bolstering the literary talent in the state. Pushkar Nath Bhan, a radio artiste, was well known for his humorous skits and other programmes. Likewise, writers are coming to the forefront in Jammu *via* the radio station. The TV station at Srinagar has furthered the incentives to the cultural movement.

The state has thrown up a number of writers in Urdu, Hindi and English, besides Kashmiri and Dogri, too numerous to be mentioned here. By and large, Dogri and Ladakhi and other state languages are coming into their own. As for Ladakhi, a beginning has been made with a collection of folk-songs, edited by Tashi Rabgias. The Academy has also published *Lokhorgi Deep* (1976), an annual publication containing an anthology of Ladakhi writings. A newspaper in Ladakhi had been started at the dawn of the century but the language had gone into disuse. The first Ladakhi newsletter was started on 22 May, 1978 at Srinagar. Thus, the Academy continues its programmes to issue books and other publications of a high literary standard in different regional languages of the state.

During recent years, the Academy has taken a leap forward in the field of letters covering Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi, Balti, Punjabi, Gujarati and Pahari languages as well as their respective cultural entities.

Performing and other arts, both traditional and modern, are encouraged. The all-India artists' camps, held in the state, by the Academy, constituted a unique cultural activity where artistes of the state interacted with those from other

states. Art and photograph exhibitions, children's art exhibitions, and related activities, at the state and district level, are complemented by such wide-ranging activities as drama and music festivals. Some festivals of dance and folklore are organised by the Academy in different parts of India. These have received resounding acclaim all over the country.

Seminars and conferences on art and cultural topics, or tagged to special events, strengthen the cultural unity of the state. The seminar on Lal Ded, the 14th-century philosopher-poetess revered by Hindus and Muslims alike, in 1979, at Srinagar was a landmark as was the all-India sculptors' camp at Jammu. Exhibitions coinciding with 15th-century Hijri celebrations—rare Quran and other manuscripts on display along with coins of Muslim kings, Arab jewellery, etc.—in November 1981, was another landmark, commendably noticed in the press and other media. One of the exhibits, a tombstone with engraved inscriptions in Arabic and Sharda (ancient script of Kashmir) attracted all-India attention.

In 1984, when the Academy celebrated its silver jubilee, such activities were at their zenith. A grand seminar was held at Srinagar, as well as exhibitions of photographs, paintings, etc., at Srinagar, Jammu, Leh, etc. The Academy gives subsidy to authors for printing their books as well as monthly stipends and financial assistance to writers, artists, etc., who are in indigent circumstances. Meeting under the presidency of the chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, in June 1988, the Academy enhanced these amounts as well as different prize moneys; new awards to be given to literary books of excellence in Hindi, Urdu and English, on an all-India basis, were also instituted. The Academy assists cultural and literary organisations. *Mushairas* are held regularly in different districts of the state. These include *Mehfil-i-Mushairas* in Gujari. On-the-spot children's music/painting competitions comprise yet other talent-fostering activities. Thus, the Academy is fostering



individual and collective creative potentiality in various fields of art and culture, besides imparting impetus to literary and cultural movement in the state.

## FOLKLORE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

India is the home of some of the oldest folklores in the world. The folklore of Kashmir has an important place in the 'literature of the people' of India which has expressed and mirrored the collective urges and experience of the folk from time immemorial. Written in the first century A.D., the *Panchatantra* (the five books) is the oldest extant collection of folk stories. The early Arabs carried these Indian fables to the highest courts of the Muslim world from where they travelled to the West. These along with the later didactic collection of *Kathasaritsagar* by Somadeva of Kashmir have been translated into almost every major language of the world.

Kashmiri, the major language of Kashmir, spoken by more than three million people, is an offshoot of the Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit language. It was enriched by Persian diction during Muslim rule, and later by Urdu. Its rich literature lives in its songs and ballads.

### Kashmiri Folk-songs

Folk-songs in Kashmir preserve the myths, customs, traditions and legends of days bygone. These are the living monuments of Kashmiri poetic glory. Rural itinerant minstrels usually carry a *dahra*, an iron rod with loose iron rings on it, and when they sing folk-songs they shake the rings skilfully up and down so as to produce a pleasing jingle. These minstrels have mostly passed on the folk-songs, stories and ballads by word of mouth down the ages. The



Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, set up in 1958, has rendered a yeoman's service in publishing folk-songs and ballads in the Kashmiri language, written in Perso-Arabic script. A book (in Urdu) has been also published on Dogri folklore.

Kashmiri folk-songs present considerable variety of theme, content and form. They can be broadly classified into opera and dance songs, pastoral lore, romantic ballads, play-songs, semi-mystic songs, etc. Then there are songs sung during particular seasons or in accompaniment to certain occupations; also sung are lullabies, wedding-songs, dirges, etc.

The predominant theme of folk-songs is a woman's touching plaint about her strayed lover. A typical love song is:

My love is out to tend his goats,  
And, he must be weaving a garland there;  
A garland of fresh, dewy, *sosan* flowers,  
For me, ye maidens.

In such songs the jilted woman addresses her girl-friend with the words, '*Hai! Vaseye*' (Alas! My Girl-friend), before expressing her grievance.

The serpentine and calmly flowing river of the happy Valley, the Jhelum, forms the theme of the folk-songs:

O thou slow-motioned Jhelum,  
For thee, let me devote my all, O Jhelum!  
How great is thy stateliness!  
For thee, let me devote my all, O Jhelum.

The peasant women sing praises of the majestic tree of Kashmir, the *chinar*, whose beautiful leaf recurs in the lovely motifs of the Valley's manifold art products:

To me, O *chinar* leaf, my love has sent thee,  
My all, O Cupid, shall I sacrifice for thee,  
Thou art, O *chinar* leaf, a prince of beauty,  
My all, O Cupid, shall I sacrifice for thee.

Saffron of Kashmir is well known in song and legend. The saffron fields of Pampur, in the vicinity of Srinagar, are famous. While picking saffron flowers, peasants, men and women, sing:

Towards Pampur went away my darling,  
Saffron flowers caught him in fragrant embrace.  
O, he is there, and ah me! I am here  
When, where, O God, would I see his face?

A village girl may sing a conceit in sweet tones:

Proud of thyself art thou,  
O saffron flower.  
Far lovelier than thee am I,  
O saffron flower!

In a wedding-song, the bridegroom's mother leads the chorus:

You pretty damsels, stay here tonight,  
O, do sing in honour of the Sultan of India.  
His wife's people claim him as their own,  
But I shall decorate his bed with mica.

The beauty of the bride is fittingly sung by the rustic muse:

Our belle is robed in muslin,  
Oh maid, who has dressed you?  
Your teeth are so many pearls,  
Who has delved them from the sea?  
You are a dealer in gems,  
O, maid, who has dressed you?

In a *ruf* (dance-song), girls with arms interlocked round each other's waists and heaving forward and backward, sing only a couplet in chorus:

O, you must tell me  
Where my boy has gone.  
Is he a fountain in life's garden,



Or, a well of nectar, sweet and delicious?

Such folk-songs are chaste, simple and full of pathos. A lovesick maiden consoles herself in these folk verses:

Awake, awake, O sweet hyacinth,  
Come on, let us dance, O sweet hyacinth.

### Folk-tales

Kashmir has a great fund of folk-tales. They are as old as the hills. Many of them like 'Zohra Khatun and Haya Bund', 'Gulala Shah', 'Bombur and Loare' and 'Himal Nagray' are pure Kashmiri in origin. *Wazir Mal* and *Lal Mal* are the two famous collections of fairy-tales in pure Kashmiri dialect which the Kashmiri villagers cherish as their treasured possessions. These have been rendered into Kashmiri and Persian verse. Others, whose variants constitute the large majority, are popular tales of the East and the West.

Some points common to the folk-tales of Kashmir and the rest of the world may be underlined. The charmed ring of Alladin has many interesting variants in the folk-tales of Kashmir. Phoenix, the legendary bird—*anqa* in Arabic countries—is called *huma* in Kashmiri tales. *Naga* or snake, also meaning spring, is peculiar to Kashmiri and Bengali tales. The magic carpet of the Arabian Nights that flies at the will of the owner is called *Bhadrapith* (Sanskrit for 'splendid seat') in Kashmiri tales. *Shah Sayar* contains a number of romantic tales and *Shashman* includes stories of thugs and highwaymen. Ashraf of the Punjabi folklore is a near echo of Sharaf of Kashmir. The singing mystic fowl whose eggs and flesh, are priceless, occurs in Russian, German, Spanish and Kashmiri tales. The goldsmith as a dishonest workman, who leads a dissolute life, appears in Siamese, German, Punjabi and Deccan tales, besides many of Kashmir.

A concluding word about folk ballads: these are popular in villages, sung by *gaivan vols* or the wandering minstrels. They sing the popular ballads: 'Yusuf and Zulekha', 'Laila and Majnu', 'Hatim Tai', etc. which are of Persian

origin, and others connected with the lives of Hindu gods, Krishna and Rama. 'Lalla Lakhman' is an example of a ballad where fun borders on the burlesque. Such pieces bring out the wit and worldly wisdom of the Kashmiri folk. Opera songs form part of *Bacha Nagma* (Kashmiri opera) of the rural areas. Radio Kashmir and Srinagar TV feature these programmes, thus helping in preserving the folklore of Kashmir.

No appreciation of a people's folklore is complete without a study of their proverbs. Kashmir has a rich store of proverbs, which are on the lips of the people. These form an epitome of their experiences in different spheres of life—social, political and philosophical. Almost every proverb has an anecdote behind it.

The muse of Kashmir has sung through her folk-songs, fresh and chaste, rhythmic and musical. In the song and dance, and other folklore of Kashmir, are embodied elements of the diverse heritage of Kashmir's rich past. With the renaissance of the literature of Kashmir, it is just as well that folklore is not only being preserved but substantial additions are also being made to it.

### Dogri Folklore

The folklore of '*Dogar Desh*' (Jammu, Chamba, Kangra, etc. which used to be one region) consists of Dogri folk-tales, folk-songs, proverbs and riddles. Dogri folk-songs constitute the most characteristic part of its folklore. These preserve their myths, customs, traditions (particularly the martial traditions) and legends of bygone days.

Most Dogri folk-songs consist of songs (chiefly quatrains) which can be divided into a number of categories. These are songs of love (themes of separation and longing being predominant), religious lore, wedding songs, ditties that go with dances, songs connected with fairs and festivals, ballads glorifying Dogra heroes and martyrs, romantic songs connected to the seasons, etc. Then there are folk-songs about sports or depicting funny situations or



merely playing up the repartees of local wits.

The Dogras are justly proud of their glorious contribution to India's military history, in having extended the country's frontiers many thousands of miles further north, to the very borders of Central Asia and Tibet. Consistent with the Dogra martial tradition, which has a fund of episodes comparable with the heroic deeds of Rajasthan, many songs and ballads recount the exploits of heroes, some portraying the conflict between love and duty in a telling manner, and others depicting the ravages of war.

### Heroes and Martyrs

The lore connected with heroes like General Zorawar Singh (who has been described by some historians as the greatest general of the 19th century) and his associates, Wazir Ratno and Basti Ram, Baj Singh, Ram Singh and many other heroes, like Mian Dedoo, has strong appeal in the Jammu and outlying provinces. These songs called *baran* or *karkan* recount the thrilling episodes of dedicated patriots who sacrificed all they had to uphold the honour of their family and country. The ballad of Dedoo Jamwal who fought against the Sikhs to the bitter end is a stirring tale—the Dogri language, which is replete with hard consonants, lending realism to the din and clamour of battle. The longest *bar* (ballad) relates to the exploits of the legendary hero, Gugoo, who fought against the Nagas, married a princess from Bengal and waged a lone but successful battle with Sultan of Ghaznavi over a cow belonging to a widow. Romantic ballads like '*Hans Morni*' and '*Rup Basant*' are comparable in their treatment and content to Punjab's celebrated counterparts '*Heer Ranjha*' and '*Sohni Mahiwal*'.

A fair is held every year at the *samadhi*—the monument—raised to Bawa (saint) Jitoo. Similar fairs are held at the shrines of other heroes and one hears the songs of their valour and martyrdom.

The folklore of the place is connected with religious shrines in Jammu and Kangra. Each song is associated with

a particular shrine, telling the story of each deity and its association with the hallowed spot. The exploits of each deity inevitably culminate in the triumph of good over evil. These songs are sung with extreme devotion even as Muslims recite the *naat* at the shrines connected with the saints.

The better known *tiraths* (shrines) which are the venues of these pilgrimages are: Vaishno Bhagwati (Jammu), Jwala Bhagwati (Kangra), Kalka (Bahu fort, Jammu), Harmandir (Samba, Jammu), Parmandal (Samba), Baij Nath (Kangra) and Sidh Mahadev (Chenani, Jammu). The *dhhol* and other drums are beaten with gusto, to the accompaniment of these songs. Earthen pitchers are used to sonic advantage with *bhajans* and religious songs which continue to have a strong appeal in rural areas.

### Dogri Folk-songs

The Dogra is strongly attached to his 'lovely Dogra land'. Many of the Dogri songs are replete with romantic descriptions of nature and man, like the following popular folk-song:<sup>1</sup>

Behold our lovely Dogra land,  
O friend, behold our glorious land.  
Groups of lion-hearted men,  
And women, the very incarnation of Durga and Chandi,  
Behold our glorious land.

Colourful country, of green ranges, joy and happiness,  
The lovely hills of Chamba and Bhales,  
Behold our glorious land.

Beautiful girls, growing to maturity like the waxing  
moon,

Fed on the nectar of springs and streamlets,  
Behold our glorious land.

Twisting streams,

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Prof. R.L. Basur.



Rippling like serpents in the embrace of towering  
mountains,  
And the milky Tawi,  
Flowing down with serpentine bends,  
Behold our glorious land.

Exquisite lakes, of Mansar and Sanasar,  
Behold in every home,  
Maidens of beauty like the full moon;  
For centuries bards and minstrels have sung,  
Praises of our glorious Dogra land.

A person who is indifferent to love as well as the  
people's martial tradition is aroused to action in a song,  
whose poignancy (of rejected love) and rhythmic grace can  
match with the best English love lyrics. Here is a translation  
of the lyric whose touching refrain is *O Meria Parliao Manuan*  
(O My Tender, Tender Love):

O my tender, tender love,  
What has been said or done,  
To make you angry with one,  
Who can reconcile and is won,  
O my tender, tender love?

Sweet unrest and sleepless vigils,  
Desires that die not take up up cudgels,  
To me your charming words are puzzles,  
O my tender, tender love.

Sweet *suchion* served with a delicious dish,  
But at lunch time you to Mandi rush;  
Can you imagine how my tears gush,  
O my tender, tender love?

Lazily lie your sword and shield  
And armour hangs on the peg unappealed.  
Ever war-bombs fail to fly you to the field,  
O my tender, tender love.

The folk bard may just weave humour into words for fun and for wiping off the tedium of the pilgrim's journey, just as:

Let us also go to the Ghagwal fair,  
But the purse is quite empty.  
It doesn't matter,  
Chatting, walking, we do the journey,  
And reach there,  
In the small hours.

### Love Songs

Dogri love songs are suffused with emotion, as deep-felt as they are spontaneous. In the love songs, the lover may be called Prithvi Singh and the girl, Inder Devi, with the quatrain running as thus:

My love, Prithvi Singh,  
Whence have the dark clouds come?  
And, Inder Devi, dark clouds overwhelm the heart,  
The eyes are raining cool waters.

The lover's flute in the wood may be beckoning the comely lass to the rendezvous:

Lover's flute is playing,  
The belle leaves her home,  
On the pretext of fetching water.

The wedding songs are sung in happy chorus by the ladies welcoming the bridegroom. The wish for a partner in life, thus expressed by a girl, in a song is addressed to her father:

My dear father,  
You are mature and wise,  
Therefore look out for  
A good partner for me.

The following quatrain expresses her longing beautifully:



My dear father  
Listen to my request,  
I want a spouse like Rama,  
Help me in this quest.

By the time the daughter reaches marriageable age, the air of romance is disturbed by the fears of the demands of dowry that may be made by the in-law folks:

The daughter's father is poor,  
The mother is distraught,  
The daughter is marriageable,  
The apprehension is,  
That the groom will demand dowry,  
Oh God! Please have mercy.  
So that our daughter is wed,  
And our honour and prestige are preserved.

There are other sad songs, too, like depicting the hapless state of a father who still has an unwed daughter on his hands:

The arch of Lahori Gate is high,  
None, passing through, need bow his head.  
But a father whose daughter is not so far wed,  
Has to bow his head even there.

Life, generally, is not a bed of roses for the Dogra woman after marriage. Here is a life of suffering, borne patiently:

I have to sweat in the field, guard it from birds and  
animals,  
And then, I have to spin at home.  
I have to fetch water from a long distance,  
And, my feet get sore.  
Tell me, O my sister, with whom am I to discuss,  
My tale of suffering and hardship?

More often than not, the Dogra woman's husband would be in the army, a long distance away. She turns to the

*patwari* to request him to write a letter for her but he does not oblige. And, she would sing her plaint:

I am sick of separation, my love,  
I am sick of separation,  
I entreat the *patwari* again and again,  
To write a letter for me, but he refuses,  
So you leave the army and return home.

The Dogri original, emphasising the emotional content of the mood of separation, reads:

*Tera miga lagda i manda, O gadda,  
Tera miga lagda i manda,  
Eh patwari migi khat rehyun likhi dinda,  
Sau sau karnian chanda.*

And then, she complains of the army:

*Kehsi banai Rama  
Jange di chakri.*

(Why, O God Rama, have you created a permanent institution like the army?)

In another song, the mood of separation is depicted beautifully:

I prefer death to separation,  
I am afraid of people's glances;  
They will covet my youth,  
Like birds falling upon a fruit-laden tree.

The pithy Dogri original reads:

*Jobana dabuta jhuli-jhuli paunda,  
Te bahi jaude najran de dar.*

There are songs known as *Gujraili*, singing of the fun and divine romance between Lord Krishna and the *gopis*.

No appreciation of the people's folklore is complete without a study of their proverbs. Jammu has a rich stock of proverbs which are on the lips of the people. These form



an epitome of their experiences in different spheres of life—social, political and philosophical. Almost every proverb has an anecdote behind it.

Coming to the modern times, there are songs, which are down-to-earth, like the one which commends savings certificates:

In twelve years' time,  
The amount will be one and a half,  
They will become fifteen,  
With which money Manoo can be educated,  
And, besides, a plot of land will be purchased.

The muse of 'Dogra Desh' sings through her folk-songs, ballads and tales of valour and courage. The song and dance, and other folklore of Jammu and surrounding areas are well preserved. Fifty Dogri folk-tales, including some from the Chamba valley, have been published so far. In 1959, Dogra Mandal, Delhi, published a selection of nine Dogri folk-tales, edited by Bansi Lal Gupta. The Dogra Association, Jammu, also brought out a collection of folk-tales entitled *EK Ha Raja?* (i.e. '*Ek Tha Raja*' in Hindi, or 'There was a Raja'). A collection of folk-songs was translated into English by Dr Karan Singh (Asia Publishing House, Bombay).

Dogri folk literature has provided entertainment and a sustained means for creative expression to the Dogras for hundreds of years. It offers immense possibilities for research to the philologist, the historian and the linguist. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages has rendered signal service to the cause of folklore through publication of eleven collections of Dogri folk-songs, six compilations of folk-tales, and one volume each of Dogri sayings and proverbs, plus a number of other essays in this field. The Academy has also brought out a book in Urdu (translation of *An Introduction to Dogri Folklore and Pahari Art* by Sansar Chand and Lakshmi Narain).

### Ladakhi Folklore

The culture of Ladakh—the magic land of legend and lore—is inspired by religion. Though the people of Ladakh are full of life, fun and mirth, they are conservative and traditional, their way of life still much the same as it was two thousand years ago. This makes for a rich folklore, remarkable for its songs and legends, some going back to the pre-Buddhist era.

The folk-songs of Ladakh range from beautiful ditties, replete with melodious and alliterative turns of phrase and idiom, to coarse and bawdy songs. Ancient songs, well preserved by word of mouth, contain a number of archaic words. The vast repertoire of Ladakhi folklore contains songs overflowing with consonants and unmusical expressions. At the other end of the scale are songs that lend themselves easily to slow, dancing movements.

By and large, whether by content or style, the boundaries of the Ladakhi folk-songs are not sharply delineated. What we may call sentimental songs or lyrics easily take on the shape of hymns and minstrel songs in Ladakh. Even with the overlapping peripheries there are dance-songs, court-songs, and songs associated with birth, wedding and death. Pre-Buddhist hymns, such as ballads in praise of Kesar, the legendary hero, are sung, to the accompaniment of music and dance, at the time of the spring or *Kesar* festival.

The folk-songs of Ladakhis are simple in thought and diction. Romantic songs are favourites with the carefree Ladakhis. Tending a flock of sheep, on the mountainside, a girl sings to a youth who is similarly employed:

In the meadow, in the meadow, in the higher meadow,  
blows—

Oh listen, lad, listen to my song—

A flower, for the sweetest that grows in field and  
garden,

Oh listen, lad, listen to my song.



Thou mayst cull the flower, sweetheart, thou mayst  
cull the tender flower,  
But thou shalt not grasp it rudely in thine hand,  
Else, it will wither in a moment, it will perish in an  
hour . . .

The song goes on with the belle telling her lover that the flower will (vicariously) cling round his heart. In a folk-song, called 'The Song of the Girl of Sheh', the girl sings of her environment, the lake and the castle, and the prince of her dreams:

On the hill in the back there is the chorten of white  
crystal,  
In front there is the lake blue like a turquoise . . .  
In the castle of Sheh the milk (of abundance) flows . . .  
Wherever our gracious prince goes.  
Oh God, protect his life!

From the celebrated saga of Kesar, the legendary hero, comes this touching song of farewell from his wife, Bruguma:

Oh! My clever king,  
When thou goest to the upper land of the gods,  
And seest all the fairies of heaven,  
Then do not forget thy wife from the land of men!

The 'Dard Song about the Origin of the Earth' is worth recounting in full for its quaint imagery:

How did the earth first grow?  
At first the earth grew on a lake.  
What grew on the water?  
On the water grew a meadow.  
What grew on the meadow?  
Three hills grew there.

What are the names of the three hills?  
The name of one hill is the 'White Jewel Hill'.  
What is the name of another hill?

The name of another hill is the 'Red Jewel Hill'.

What is the name of the one remaining hill?

The name of the one remaining hill is the 'Blue Jewel Hill'.

What grew on the three hills?

Three trees grew there.

What are the names of the three trees?

The name of one tree is the 'White Sandal Tree',

The name of another is the 'Blue Sandal Tree',

The name of the one remaining tree is the 'Red Sandal Tree'.

What grew on the three trees?

Three birds grew on the three trees.

What is the name of one bird?

The name of one bird is 'Wild Eagle'.

What is the name of another bird?

The name of another bird is 'Bamdoor Hen'.

What is the name of one remaining bird?

The name of the one remaining bird is 'Blackbird'.

Zorawar Singh, the conqueror of Ladakh and a brave general of Raja Gulab Singh, is a legendary figure in Ladakhi folklore. He died when his expedition against Tibet ended in a disaster. The Ladakhis sing a song of Zorawar's wife who had accompanied him to Ladakh:

I do not wish to eat bread received from the sinful  
northerners,

I do not wish to drink water received from the sinful  
northerners,

Amidst the inhabitants of this land I have no friends  
and relations . . .

When arriving at the Zoji-la pass, my fatherland can  
be seen . . .

Although I can see my fatherland, I shall not arrive  
there . . .



The ballads of Ladakh have a local colouring but the folk-tales are much the same as in northern India, for their preoccupation with gods and goddesses and demons, or bringing out morals at the end. The proverbs<sup>2</sup> are quite native in their diction, condensing the wisdom of the ages. A few samples are:

A Lama cannot help taking his fee and a wolf cannot help eating a lamb.

Seven paces suffice to test a man and a horse.

The conversation of woman is as long as a day's march on horse-back.

The fire is in front of you, and the sun in the distance.  
(The poor friend near you is better than a relation far away.)

You must cross the bridge which you have built yourself.

(You must abide by the words which you have uttered.)

Father crossed the path and mother got the mountain sickness.

(A quarrel affects the wrong person.)

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<sup>2</sup> From *A Thousand Tibetan Proverbs and Wise Sayings from Ladakh*, collected by Rev. S. Gergan; Introduction by S.S. Gergan.

## DANCE, DRAMA, MUSIC AND ART

That dance, drama, music and the fine arts date back to hoary antiquity in the state is amply evidenced in the ancient annals. The arts reached their apogee during the Hindu rule. These were encouraged by the Muslim rulers also, insofar as the advent of Islam in Kashmir was not in a fanatic or puritanic form. The synthesising cult of Sufism favoured dance and music, and thus the classical dance forms prevalent in Kashmir absorbed the influences from the dance techniques of Persia and Central Asia. In the process, Kashmiri music developed affinities with both Indian and Persian prototypes, and evolved *Sufiana kalam* with fifty-four *maqams* (modes) which have Indian as well as Persian names.

As in the rest of India, classical dancing in Kashmir had a religious background. There are quite a few references to dancing in the *Rajatarangini*: in the first chapter, Kalhana mentions Jalauka, son and successor of Asoka, who was a worshipper of Shiva and a lover of music and dance. That dancing was not looked down upon as a profession is apparent from the chronicle, wherein it is recorded that King Chakravarman (A.D. 923-933) married two professional dancing girls, Mamsi and Nagalata, who were sisters, and belonged to a lower caste. Similarly, Utkarsa (A.D. 1089) married Sahaja, a dancing girl attached to a temple, whom "he had seen in the dancing state". Kalhana has recorded how the performing artistes most ably depicted the vast range of human emotions through



their art, won admiration from the kings and acclaim from the audiences.

One of the last Hindu kings of Kashmir, Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101), who maintained a magnificent court at least in the early part of his reign and was a lover of music and the arts, patronised dance and drama. He himself taught dancing girls how to act and dance. Dancers who generally belonged to the so-called lower classes were raised by him to the status of courtiers. From Kalhana, Bilhana and other historians we know that temple dancers maintained a high standard of their art, as was prevalent in other parts of the country. The treatises on poetics, aesthetics and literary criticisms of great masters like Kshemendra, Mammata, Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta establish the fact that dance and music were not isolated phenomena of cultural life but formed the essential ingredients of the dance-drama which, narrating the stories of kings and deities, were very popular with the people. Students of Indian classical dance are conversant with the Kashmiri commentaries on Bharata's *Natyashastra* and the original works on dance that emanated from the Valley from Udbhatta, Lollabata, Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka and others. The tandava of Shiva is described in *Haravijayakavya* by Rajanaka Ratnakara. The surviving sculptures and reliefs on the walls and columns of old temples, which have figures of dancers, embellished with ornaments and graceful hair styles, point to the eminent heights attained by dance and drama.

King Kalasa (A.D. 1063-89) introduced ballet dancing and choral music. The vogue of classical dancing continued as far down as the 14th century A.D., i.e. long after Hindu rule had ended. Shrivara, the historian, describes graphically a classical dance performed at the court of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (A.D. 1420-70). Specifically, he mentions the plays, *Zaina Vilas* and *Zaina Charitha*, which were written and staged. These were continuations of the earlier plays like *Vikrama Charitha* by Bilhana which was most probably

modelled on Bana's *Harsha Charitha*. These dramas were staged by professional artistes in ancient and medieval Kashmir. There are references to theatrical performances, the stage and strolling bands of players in the *Rajatarangini*. Suitably dressed, the players would adorn themselves with emollients and various colours. Rendered with aplomb and realism, the comic roles depicted the *nouveau riche*: Damaras or the rapacious Kayastha. On festive occasions, the strolling bands of players received customary gifts from the king and nobles, these bonuses being over and above their earnings from public performances.

King and commoner alike cultivated music as a fine art in ancient Kashmir. Music was played in Buddhist *viharas* in the reign of Jalauka. Music was a must at religious ceremonies, particularly those connected with *tantric* worship. Indulged in at bed-time, music of the lute and flute was a luxury of kings and high nobles. King Kalasa, mentioned earlier on, popularised light operatic (*upanga-gita*) songs, and his son, Harsha, would amuse his father in public with songs.

The instruments most in favour were the lute, the flute and the drum. The temple music accompaniments were the conch, a big drum and cymbals. There is also mention of *hudukka* (in the *Rajatarangini*) which can be compared to a bagpipe. Folk music also existed in ancient Kashmir as a distinct genre, not in competition with classical music. *Chakkri* (folk chorus), which continues to be popular, and is known to Indian audiences via TV programmes, is traceable to the time of Kalhana (12th century A.D.) and earlier. King Bhiksecara (A.D. 1120-21) occupied himself in "playing music on earthen pots, brass vessels and other such instruments" during his short reign.

The manuscripts of both *Zaina Vilas* and *Zaina Charitha* are not to be found today. The manuscript of another Kashmiri play, *Banaswara Vadh*, staged during that period is, however, available. It has been transcribed into modern Kashmiri by Mohammad Amin Kamil. According to Kamil,



the work is a full-fledged opera with the tune (*chhand*, the Kashmiri word for it) for each song provided in the text. A factual history of Kashmiri drama has been possible only from this time.

Some of the Sultans of Kashmir were proficient in classical and folk music. A classical singer himself, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin maintained musicians at the court, including Karnataka musicians who popularised a number of Karnataka *ragas*. Among the Chak Sultans, Hussain Shah and Yusuf Shah (the consort of queen-poetess Habba Khatun) were great patrons of dance and music. Kashmiri music drew nearer to both Indian and Persian music, and in course of time developed its own idiom, *Sufiana kalam*, which lays stress on the diction of the songs and is sung in chorus, even as the Persian or Turkish counterpart is recited. Like the *ragas*, its *maqams* (modes) have their time significance. The most favoured instrument is the 100-stringed *santoor* (*san* means 'hundred' and *toor*, is strings, in Persian), which is the *sitar* of Kashmir. The most popular instrument in folk music is the *rabab*, introduced by Zain-ul-Abidin from Turkistan. The *sitar* of the Kashmiri musician is the *saz* (or *saz-i-kashmir*) which is a bowed instrument, and is accompanied by a *dukra*.

The vogue of dance and music in the liberal reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin has been mentioned already. During the Mughal rule (starting in A.D. 1586), the emperors would witness dance performances in their beautiful gardens. The dancers reciting songs in Persian (which had replaced Sanskrit by then) came to be known as *hafizas*. Having received an exacting training, the *hafiza* would sing to the accompaniment of *Sufiana kalam*, with *santoor*, *soz*, *tabla*, etc. Their dress resembled that of the Kathak dancers of northern India. Until the thirties or so of this century, Kashmiris holidaying on the lakes in house-boats would enjoy *hafiza* dances; the *hafizas* would be on hand during wedding celebrations, at the homes or when the wedding processions would be taken out on boats on the Jhelum. Along

with the *hafiza* dance, which generally catered to the elite among the Hindus and Muslims, there evolved the popular dance form, known as *Bacha Nagma*, introduced by Afghans from Kabul, in which a teenaged boy, dressed as a girl dancer, is trained in the *hafiza* style of dancing. *Bacha Nagma* continues to be popular in the villages, particularly at harvest time.

Among the folk dance forms of today, the only one popular is the *ruf*. Mainly danced by women on festive occasions, and by boy-dancers in the *Bacha Nagma* opera, *ruf* is an offshoot of *chakkri*, which is a form of collective singing by men and women. *Ruf* has thus descended of a dance form of collective folk merry-making in items when singing and dancing were in vogue. Another dance form, *dambaali*<sup>1</sup> danced to the accompaniment of *naghara* (drum) and *suranai* (a kind of *shehnai*, the reed pipe) has lost much of the cadence of step and music, and is practised by the so-called backward class of *watals* (mostly sweepers) only. Another lesser known dance form is the *wuegi-nachun*, danced by Kashmiri Pandit women round the bridal *rangoli* (patterns made with henna and lime and other colours) after the bride has left for her husband's home.

The traditional *bhanda paathar*, which is the folk opera-cum-ballet still popular in the countryside, is of ancient origin, amply demonstrated by the versatility of the repertoire of the *bhanda*s (opera dancers). The *paathars* are mostly highly dramatised anecdotes, some of the lampooning degenerating into vulgar obscenities. The *paathars*, nevertheless, are basically folk-operas which have lost their musical notes.

In the modern period, the last but one Dogra ruler of the state, Maharaja Pratap Singh, fostered the advent of

<sup>1</sup> Kashmir's well-known writer and playwright, the late Dina Nath Nadim, in a 1968 paper, which appeared in *The Cultural Digest*, Srinagar, August, 1975, observed: "Interestingly enough, the people in Bangladesh and borders of NEFA have a dance similar to our *dambaali* and they call it *damil*."



drama on the stage. A few dramatic clubs were formed and enacted the plays of Agha Hashar and Betab. The first Kashmiri play, *Satch Kahāwat* (True Tale) was staged in 1928, dealing with the theme of Harishchandra's self-sacrifice for truth. The National Cultural Front, formed soon after Independence, staged Kashmiri plays, which were witnessed by thousands of people on the stage and in the open, a sign of the cultural upsurge of the time. Kashmiri plays, *Greesi Sund Ghara* (Villager's Home) by Hajini and *Batahar* (Pandit's Quarrel) by the late Pandit Prem Nath Pardesi were started under the auspices of the Front. An attempt was made at the instance of the late Commander Dhanwantri to integrate some of the virile dance forms like *bhangra* of the Jammu region with those of Kashmiri forms. A *bhangra* ballet entitled 'Land to the Tiller' was composed by Dina Nath Nadim in 1949; its staging forms a watershed in the modern ballet of Kashmir coming into its own.

The accent after this landmark was on plays that could depict the men and manners as well as the aspirations of the people. *Bombur Ta Yamberzal*, the first opera in the real sense of the word, was composed and staged: its music systematically based on folk tunes. The romantic story of the opera is based on a folk-song that the bumble bee (*bombur*) and the narcissus (*yamberzal*), despite their mutual love, never commune in life. The representative Kashmiri folk-tale *Himal Nagray*, was composed as an opera by Dina Nath Nadim and Roshan, and staged with great success. Later, Nadim composed *Meghdoot*, based on Kalidasa's famous poem; yet another, *Shihil Kul* (Shady Tree) was pegged on the theme of national integration.

Another opera, *Gulrez*, composed by G.R. Santosh, was broadcast from Radio Kashmir. In the typical opera tradition, the characters of most of these operas were the flowers, the song-birds, the trees, the breeze, the rivers and the lakes of the Valley, the background formed by the colourful, variegated landscape, and the exotic, haunting folk tunes complementing the soft step of the *ruf* dance.

These experiments in theatre art, continuing under the patronage of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, assure its progressive growth, while the radio and TV continue to provide the mass outlets to dance and drama forms of the state.

### Painting, Sculpture and Art

The aesthetic qualities of Kashmiris, evinced in their art and architecture, found expression in painting also, whether in illustrations of manuscripts or various depictions on cotton and other material. Floral designs and calligraphy became the vogue with the advent of Islam. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, encouraged painting, and the Kashmiri painter developed a style of his own, called the Kashmiri *qalam*.<sup>2</sup> The excellence and variety of the Kashmir landscape is the distinguishing trait of the *qalam* paintings.

The Kashmiri artist was at his best in producing book illustrations—on Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts—which have survived. Actually, the art was practised even during the first quarter of this century. In the Hindu period, Shaivism provided the theme for many paintings. Quite a few of that age are devoted to Goddess Durga of the Hindu pantheon, in the form of eighteen-headed Sharika. On certain festival days, the Kashmiri Pandit families continue to receive bright-coloured paintings of gods and goddesses, executed deftly by the family priest.

The Kashmiri artist was at home in the field of sculpture also, as can be seen in Chapter XIII. The surviving specimens, after the Christian era, reveal a range and fecundity, comparable to the best in other parts of the country. The mouldings on Harwan terracotta tiles point to a high degree of sophistication in the plastic art.

<sup>2</sup> A remarkable set of twenty-four large *qalam* paintings on cotton—produced in Kashmir in mid-16th century A.D.—is extant in the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Several rare pieces were also preserved in the Srinagar Museum.



Figure sculpture during the rule of the Karkota dynasty was affected by artistic influences from Central Asia and from Mathura. Sculptural art reached its zenith under the Utpala dynasty, thereafter suffering a decline.

The medieval artist of Kashmir, restricted in the fields of wall paintings or murals, expressed himself in calligraphy, which came to be ranked higher than painting, sculpture and, even architecture. Muhammad Hassan of Kashmir became a court calligrapher of Emperor Akbar and was honoured with the title of *zarin qalam* ('wielder of the golden pen'). Shah Jahan patronised a number of Kashmiri calligraphists. Using a reed pen with the precision of a medallist, the calligraphist of Kashmir, innately imbued with a sense of the beautiful, excelled at his art. Since he used an indigenously-made indelible ink, his works survive to this day.

In the later 18th and early 19th centuries, the Kashmiri artists were influenced by the painters of Basohli and Kangra, and created some fine pieces of secular themes. Basohli, a vassal of Jammu kings in mid-18th century and after, developed a unique school, famous for its 'primitive' miniatures, which please the eye more than the accomplished products of the semi-Mughal Kangra style. Basohli painting has been characterised by a competent critic<sup>3</sup> as "among the great achievements of Indian, nay, of human art" and "more alive and more inspiring than most of the contemporary art".

### Jammu

The art products, specially the celebrated miniatures of Basohli (132 km from Jammu, now a dilapidated township) have a pride of place in the great art museums of the world. The Amar Mahal Palace and the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu, house collections of these exquisite paintings in the state. An extraordinary terseness of the compositions, depicted

<sup>3</sup> H. Goetz in *Kashmiri*, fortnightly, July 16, 1951 issue, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi.

with intense feeling and the utmost economy of line, are the distinguishing features of the Basohli *qalam* paintings. Another unique characteristic feature is their strong local flavour, typified by the brave romantic hero courting the frail but beautiful lady.

At the folk level, the typical art of the Jammu area is to be seen on the walls of *baulis* or the constructions around a spring, usually in the vicinity of a temple, whose water is used for drinking and bathing. As in different parts of India and Nepal, the walls are usually ornamented with sculptures or engravings of gods and goddesses. The *naga* (or the snake, considered the deity of the water) provides a common motif for their ornamentations, the patterns varying from simple to elaborate. Enduring specimens of *bauli* art, noted for their excellence, are to be found at Billavar, Sukrala, Sudh Mahadev and Udhampur. Wall paintings in the huts of villagers surprise the onlooker with the degree of artistry attained by the folk. Executed in eye-catching rich colours, the patterns are elaborate and traditional.

Dance, music and songs of the Jammu division also reflect the life of the folk—the march of seasons, sowing and harvesting of crops, births, marriages and deaths. *Kudd* is the popular dance of the upland dwellers. Usually performed at night after the sowing or other agricultural operations are over, *Kudd* starts with a slow rhythm, the dancers (wearing *churidar* pyjamas, or long robes falling to the knees) dance round and round a fire in an open space. To the lively accompaniment of musicians playing on the flute, drum and *narasinha*, the tempo of the dance rises to a crescendo, until the dancers, uttering loud cries, are quite tired.

Another typical folk dance of the rural people of Jammu region, inhabiting the areas between the uplands and the plains is *phummian* (the word meaning 'blooming', in Dogri). The gaily attired dancers open and close their fingers to symbolise the flowers in bloom. Beaming with *joie de vivre*, the dancers move around gracefully, with gusto



and glee, portraying the gay mood of the dancer. *Bhangra*, the vigorous folk dance associated more with the Punjab, is quite popular among the people of the plains in the Jammu district. High-spirited revelry, the dancers leaping in the air, performing acrobatic feats, distinguish this virile dance, which has become a feature of marriage processions.

Particularly popular during the *Lori* festival in Jammu is the folk dance called *dandaras*. An effigy made of bamboos and coloured paper, resembling a peacock, is carried by each group of dancers, who dance around it with gusto. Each one carries a short stick and each dancer hits the sticks carried by the other group. The skilled dancer is the one who can hit the sticks of others, himself gyrating in different postures.

As for Dogri-Pahari music, it has a long and rich tradition. Songs welcoming different seasons are accompanied with the virile *bhangra* and other dances. The musicality of Dogras appears at its best in the singing of different forms of folk-songs. The wind instruments used are *nagaja* (or *galjoja*), *turturi*, *kail*, *narsinha* and *nafeeri*. The stringed musical instruments are *king*, *chakara* and *iktara*. Among the drums, besides the *dholki*, *nagar* and *duff* are popular. Clapping of hands, along with dance movements, heighten the effect of the songs.

### Ladakh

Invariably every Ladakhi village, according to its size, has a big or small *gompa* (monastery). It is both a religious and temporal institution, and has, in either capacity, fostered dances and music. Dances by the folk, to the accompaniment of music, whether pertaining to religious observances or special family occasions like births and marriages, are important elements in the life-style of the gay Ladakhis.

The Ladakhi New Year is a special occasion for spectacular dances. It is celebrated traditionally, with pomp and eclat, on the first of the 11th Tibetan lunar month. Then there is the Great Festival of Leh, held at the end of the

12th Tibetan month. During marriages also the common denominator is music, dance and attendant festivities.

The festival of prayer which falls four weeks after the New Year festival excels the latter in splendour. This ten-day festival is remarkable for dances and other religious spectacles. Wearing brocade tunics and exotic conical hats, the Lamas are supposed to visualise themselves 'not as *bhikhshus* but as gods'. The star attraction is the three-day festival at Hemis Gompa for its great spectacle of masked dances and plays by Lamas.

The men and women who participate in these dances wear colourful costumes, i.e., long gowns set off by special headgear. The quilted skull caps worn by women, their ears covered by semi-circular, red, woollen lappets, are complemented by the quaint headgear of the men and Lamas. The songs are so worded and loaded with refrain that these lend themselves easily to slow, rhythmic dance movements.

The so-called 'devil dances' constitute an important element in the social entertainment of the Ladakhis. The uproarious song-and-dance mirth, created by these mask dances, which invariably depict the victory of the right over evil, is kept up by the all-round consumption of huge bowls of *chang*, Ladakhis' own country liquor. Song-and-dance entertainment, enlivened by liberal doses of *chang*, mark the finale of birth and marriage celebrations.



## PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The 'New Kashmir', which the people of Kashmir had adopted as their programme as early as 1944, envisaging a socialistic order in which social, economic and political justice would cover all institutions of the state, has been the target of the economic development of the state ever since 1947. There has been all-round consolidation and planned progress in various spheres of development as a result of the cumulative advantages flowing from the state's accession to India.

Planning at district and lower levels has been integrated with the programme of the region and the state as a whole, and steps taken to remove regional imbalances wherever they have existed. Hence there has been a progressive increase in the provision of the plan funds (Central and state sectors) under the Five-Year Plans.

The objectives of the Eighth Five-Year Plan for Jammu and Kashmir were self-reliance, increase in productivity, technological upgradation, poverty alleviation and increase in employment opportunities. The thrust areas were horticulture, forestry, soil conservation, animal husbandry, development of economic and social infrastructure, handicrafts and tourism. Unfortunately, a major part of the Eighth Five-Year Plan period was co-terminus with the prevalence of disturbed conditions in the state. Therefore, the desired objectives could not be fully achieved.

The outlay for the Eighth Plan 1992-97 was fixed at Rs 4000 crores at 1991 prices. The approved plan outlays for

1992-97 added up to Rs 4969.50 crores at current prices. Because of the gap between the resources and the expenditure, the diversion of plan resources during the first four years of the Eighth Five-Year Plan was Rs 555 crores, accounting for 15 per cent of the total approved outlays and 21 per cent of the outlays earmarked for capital formation.

### **Annual Plan 1996-97**

The size of the Annual Plan 1996-97 which was tentatively fixed at previous year's level, was finalised by the Planning Commission after the new government took over the state in October, 1996. As against Rs 1050 crores for 1995-96 it was fixed at Rs 1250 crores, i.e. a step up of 19 per cent. Additionally, Rs 4 crores were provided for development of infrastructure in the Ladakh region. Even though additional funds were made available at the fag end of the year, the administrative machinery was geared up to accelerate the ongoing projects for meaningful utilisation of the additional funds.

As per the revised estimates for 1996-97, the revenue component of the plan was expected to register an increase of Rs 12 crores. In the capital outlays, there was a marginal shortfall of Rs 8 crores which had to be diverted towards the revenue expenditure.

The Annual Plan 1997-98 happens to be the first year of the Ninth Five-Year Plan. This provided the opportunity to review the existing programmes and strategies and make appropriate shift in inter-sectoral priorities. The Godbole Committee is expected to devise an appropriate strategy and approach for the Ninth Five-Year Plan, keeping in view the national guidelines fixed by the Planning Commission. The size of the Annual Plan 1997-98 has been fixed at a level of Rs 1550 crores which marks a step up of 24 per cent over the Annual Plan for 1997, the highest step up given to the state so far.

The next plan has a revenue component of Rs 464 crores against the current year's revised estimates of Rs 334



crores, i.e. a step up of about 39 per cent. This, *inter alia*, includes salary of over 19,000 posts created under the Special Employment Package which is mostly borne on plan budget (Rs 87 crores), DA and Interim Relief (Rs 33 crores).

The capital outlay in the plan is of the order of Rs 1086 crores, bearing a step-up of 18 per cent over the current year's revised estimates at Rs 919.87 crores.

A major thrust is being given to the infrastructural sectors like roads, irrigation and basic minimum services like education, health, water supply which are in need of considerable augmentation. Power constitutes one of the topmost priorities of the state. Besides making substantial allocation for this sector, it is proposed to attract private funds for execution of new hydel projects in the state.

The broad sectoral distribution by services and also a comparison with the 1996-97 figures is as under:

	1996-97 App. Outlay	1997-98 Rev.Est. Pro.Outlay (Rs in crores)
Agriculture & allied services	117.65	116.55
Rural development	44.69	46.30
Spl. area programme	47.59	53.40
Irrigation and flood control	62.03	58.83
Energy	375.63	368.09
Industry and minerals	49.33	54.58
Transport and communication	113.16	127.93
Science, tech. & environment	2.90	2.55
General economic services	48.60	62.58
Social services	375.41	349.23
General services	13.01	13.96
Total	1250.00	1254.00

### Land Reforms and Agriculture

Among the states of the Indian Union, the Jammu and Kashmir state has had the unique distinction of having introduced land reforms of considerable magnitude. Feudal institutions such as *jagirs*, *muafis* and *mukkararies*, rent-free

lands, were liquidated summarily as long ago as 1948. The salutary feature of the reforms introduced as a result of the enforcement of the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act 1950 was that as many as 9,000 and odd landowners were expropriated from 1.82 lakh hectares of land and out of this, 0.94 lakh hectares of land were transferred in ownership rights to cultivating peasants free of any encumbrances. By far the most important step taken towards the implementation of this programme was the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reform which was amended in 1978. Under the measure, absentee landlordism was completely abolished, and a ceiling of 5.1 standard hectares fixed on agricultural land holdings, excluding orchards in the state. The reform was bound to achieve the twin purpose of giving the cultivator his rightful place in the social order, and also ensure more efficient utilisation of the state's resources.

- The main objectives of the government's strategy are: achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance in terms of production of foodgrains;
- to improve and augment the income levels of the farming community; and
- to ensure better income distribution and to reduce regional disparities.

The state is predominantly a mono-cropped and rain-fed economy with about 40 per cent of the area in Jammu division and 60 per cent in Kashmir division having assured means of irrigation. Agriculture is one of the key sectors and the mainstay of the state's economy. The productivity level of paddy at about 40 quintals per hectare in Kashmir Valley is the highest in the country. Rice, maize and wheat are the major crops.

Agricultural operations have remained uninterrupted in the state during all these years of turmoil. Although the graph of agriculture production has been amenable to the vagaries of nature, still agricultural production has registered a stead growth. The state's foodgrain production rose



from 14.4 lakh tonnes in 1985-86 to 11.42 lakh tonnes in 1989-90 and to 1972.72 lakh tonnes (approx.) in 1994-95. The foodgrain production is expected to increase to 22.59 lakh tonnes by the end of the Ninth Plan as against 13.56 lakh tonnes at the end of the Eighth Plan (1990-95). A similar upward trend is discernible in regard to consumption of chemical fertilisers which has gone up from 43,400 metric tonnes to 72,400 metric tonnes during the same period. The average per hectare yield of rice has increased from 13.89 quintals in 1989-90 to 22.6 quintals in 1994-95. The average yield of maize and wheat per hectare has increased from 15.65 quintals and 11.50 quintals in 1989-90 to 18.71 quintals and 14.29 quintals, respectively, in 1993-94.

There has been a major thrust on the seed production programme to comport with the specialised requirements of the agro-climatic zones of the state. The area under oil-seeds has increased from 70,000 hectares in 1989-90 to 1.76 lakh hectares in 1994-95 and that of pulses from 40,000 hectares in 1989-90 to 81,000 hectares in 1994-95. Given the conducive climatic factors, saffron and *zeera* cultivation in the Valley and Doda has received a tremendous impetus. These crops have potentiality for earning foreign exchange for the country. The area under saffron has gone up from 4,000 hectares in 1989-90 to 4,383 hectares in 1993-94 with corresponding increase in production from 90.27 quintals to 130.65 quintals. The saffron production has been encouraged in the non-traditional areas.

The Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, established in the year 1982, has created its own niche in purveying a strong training and research input, for promotion of agriculture and horticulture in the state. After assiduous research carried over years, the University has been able to evolve new varieties of rice and oilseeds, suitable for temperate areas. The new varieties of seeds of rice and maize will replace the existing varieties which were introduced twenty years ago and have outlived their genetic purity.

Under the Intensive Agriculture Programme, a number of high-yielding varieties of seeds have been tried and introduced to boost up agricultural production. This process was easier as land productivity in the state is higher in comparison with many areas elsewhere in the country. The state's agricultural experimentation has borne fruit: two high-yielding varieties of rice, K-78 and K-84, suitable for high regions, were evolved. Paddy has been cultivated in higher reaches of the Valley which experience early snowfall.

Increasing agricultural production through extension of irrigation is part of the basic agricultural strategy. A number of irrigation projects such as the remodelling of the Ranbir canal, the Pargwal canal and the Udhampur canal in the Jammu division, have been completed.

The Ravi-Tawi Irrigation Complex symbolises execution of the grand concept of using to the last drop the available water resources of all major rivers flowing in the Jammu division and harnessing in the service of agriculture by creating irrigation facilities for the arid and backward belt of the division.

Underground water resources are also being explored and exploited in the areas of the Jammu division where gravity schemes are not feasible.

A new irrigation scheme, namely 'Igophy' has been introduced in Ladakh district. Special projects like multiple-cropping schemes have caught on. While in the Kashmir region wheat, oilseeds and fodder cultivation is being introduced as a second crop, in Jammu, farmers are raising paddy as an additional crop. Still another innovation is the introduction of mushrooms—European, Japanese and other strains. Of the produce, 90 per cent is canned and exported from the state, under the guidance and supervision of the agriculture department.

Mushroom demonstration-cum-training centres have been established at Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag (in Kashmir) and at Ranbir Singh Pura in the Jammu division.



The World Bank has provided financial assistance to the state for developing mushroom cultivation on modern lines.

### Horticulture

Celebrated for its rich and luscious fruits since ancient days, the fruit industry has been a source of income to the state exchequer. In recent years, as a result of the all-round economic and technological advancement of the state, the fruit industry has received a great fillip, leading to greater production and export of the produce.

This sector constitutes the core of the agricultural economy of the state. At present, about 20 per cent of the total cultivated area is under horticulture crop. About 4.5 lakh families are engaged directly or indirectly with horticultural activities. In physical terms, the area under fruit cultivation has registered considerable increase from 12,400 hectares in the 1950s to 1.73 lakh hectares by the end of the Seventh Plan period. Total fruit production in the state has increased from 16,000 metric tonnes in 1950s to 7.60 lakh tonnes in 1989-90 and up to 9.10 lakh tonnes in 1995-96. Fruit export was to the tune of 7.10 lakh tonnes in this period.

Horticulture constitutes a critical area of the state's economy, contributing about Rs 400 crores of the state's domestic product. Several steps are being taken to promote horticulture in a big way. Sopore is the main fruit-producing district in the Valley and accounts for 50 per cent of the total fruit production.

The apple occupies a predominant position amongst horticulture crops, constituting 45 per cent of the total area under tree crops. However, as most of the strains used are old, these are in need of replacements. For this purpose, a variegated diversification in the case of the apple has been undertaken so that the rejuvenation of local varieties like Ambri and Maharaji, famous for their distinct flavour, takes place.

In apple cultivation, the thrust is on promoting high

density plantations and reduction in gestation period. Fruit growers are being encouraged to use cardboard boxes for packaging of fruit by providing subsidy to them both from the state government and under a scheme of the National Horticulture Board, Government of India. Enlarged facilities are being set up for processing and canning of fruits in the state. A major fruit apple concentrate plant is coming up in the assisted sector at Jammu, with foreign collaboration.

Horticultural activities are also being given a major thrust in hilly areas of the state.

The other fruits are walnuts, almonds, pears, cherries, apricots and peaches in the temperate areas and mango, citrus and *ber* in sub-tropical areas. An apricot drying plant was commissioned at Kargil in 1996. The horticulture crops have a very high advantage in the context of *kandi-karewa* and hilly areas of the state by way of providing a mechanism for conservation of land resource and retention of sub-surface moisture, so as to contribute substantially to maintaining ecology of the area. As per a survey, about 7.30 lakh hectares of land in the Shiwalik hills as well as in the *karewas*, it has been observed that these do not have assured means of irrigation. It is proposed to tackle this area in a phased manner. The strategy would be organised on an area approach so as to ensure intensive coverage and to provide the back-up of infrastructure facilities at minimum cost. Another important component would be the introduction of the zonalisation concept. The cultivation of most suited fruit crops in a particular agro-climatic zone shall be encouraged.

The main activities of fruit growing being confined to rural areas, it is proposed to cover the urban area under this programme as well as in a small manner for aesthetic beauty, ecological improvement and to contribute to the nutritional needs. A total of 15,000 households is proposed to be covered during the Eighth Plan period at a cost of Rs 10 lakhs under this head.



The state government had also taken up in April 1990, a World Bank-aided horticulture development programme captioned North-West Horticulture Project. For this purpose, Rs 900 lakhs were proposed during the Eighth Plan period.

Walnut is the next important item, covering nearly 18,000 hectares of land. The state has almost a monopoly in growing dry fruits like walnuts. The project for transfer of technology on vegetative propagation of walnuts with the help of Food and Agriculture Organisation, an organ of the United Nations, is under implementation. This is expected to reduce the current gestation period of sixteen years to four or five years and also to ensure uniform quality of produce, besides increasing productivity levels.

Saffron cultivation is unique to Jammu and Kashmir state, the only other country producing the flower crop being Spain. The annual production of saffron, confined to Pampore in the Kashmir Valley and to the Kishtwar valley of Jammu province, varies from 10 to 12 tonnes. The mushroom industry has taken spurt recently and is growing at a fast speed.

### **Co-operative Movement**

The co-operative movement gained steady momentum during the last twenty-five years. With a view to building up a self-sustaining economy, the movement has been popularised in far-off corners of the state. Co-operatives with a multi-purpose role have entered the various sectors of the state's economy.

Agricultural credit societies are the kernel of the co-operative movement. Their main objective is to raise funds by deposits from members and thus encourage thrift and self-help among them. By 1982-83, the number of these societies had risen to 1,558 from 1,147 in 1971-72, the membership during the same period rose from 3.07 lakhs to 4.17 lakhs. In the past, the co-operative movement in the state had confined itself mostly to the provision of rural

credit. The scope of the movement has since been enlarged and there are not only multi-purpose co-operative societies but also co-operative unions of farmers, labourers, fishermen, milkmen, transporters, artisans, etc.

The Khadi and Village Industry Board of the state government also organises co-operative societies and individual units creating employment for thousands. The Khadi and Village Industries Board, set up in 1961, has played an important role for the concerned industries, through financing the industries, artisans' societies as well as the individuals. Covering industries such as soap-making, willow wicker, village oil, bee-keeping, papier maché, fruit preservation and match industry, the finance is provided on easy terms and at a low interest of 4 per cent.

There are 120 fruit-grower co-operative societies with a membership of 11,228. Five women's co-operatives have been formed. Likewise, a saffron growers' co-operative society has been formed at Pampore, to provide finance and marketing facilities to saffron growers. There are nearly 500 industrial co-operative societies. Thus, all-round efforts are afoot to further the co-operative movement in the state.

### **Irrigation and Power**

The state has an identified hydro potential of over 15,000 MWs, out of which hardly 10 per cent has been harnessed till date. A major portion of this hydro potential, about 6,000 MWs is on the Chenab river which is a veritable goldmine for the state, and waiting to be harnessed. Kashmir province has an identified potential of about 2,000 MWs, out of which about 35 per cent has been utilised so far. The Eighth Five-Year Plan outlay for power sector stands at Rs 1175.48 crores, but out of a total of 6,477 inhabited villages 6,241 villages stand electrified upto 1995-96. The installed power capacity by the end of March 1995 was 387.30 MWs with another 3.65 MWs added in 1995-96.

A provision for Rs 205.52 crore stands earmarked for irrigation and flood control including command area



development programme of the state during the Eighth Five-Year Plan. The area irrigated was 4.42 lakh hectares by 1994-95 end.

With a view to tapping the available hydel potential, the state government is exploring the possibility of attracting private, both local and foreign, capital/assistance for taking up major hydel projects in the state. The state government has decided that the approved outlay for power generation will henceforth be regarded as the state share for Power Development Corporation and will be released on quarterly basis. Upper Sindh hydel project is a major priority and was proposed to be commissioned by December 1998. The Salal hydel project with a capacity of about 345 MWs in the central sector is already in operation as is the Uri hydel project which accounts for 480 MWs of power. Another project, the Dulhasti project, accounting for 390 MWs is under consideration.

The government strategy is to concentrate on short duration schemes. Power is expected to become available during the current year from Pahalgam hydel project (3 MW), Machhil hydel project (0.7 MW), Iqbal hydel project (1.25 MW), Huftal hydel project (1 MW) and Chenani-II/Seva-III (9 MW).

It has been decided to ensure the completion of Zainakote grid station by end of 1997. Similarly, work will also be completed on 120 MVA stations at Kathua, Akhnoor, Rajouri and Ranbir Singh Pura during 1997-98. However, priority will be given to the completion of Sazgari Pura grid station including Ring Around Srinagar, Kishenpur-Ambgharota and Burn (Ambgharota) distribution system.

Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed for the 450-MW Baglihar project which is right on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway. It envisages a 141 m high dam, diverting the water through a short 10 m DIA tunnel to the power station, housing three units of 150 MW each and generating with a head of 129 m. This project shall annually generate a total of 2,600 million units of energy.

The 103-m high diversion dam of Kishenganga project will be located in the Gurez valley. Water will be conveyed by a 6.5 m DIA, 21.66 km-long tunnel across Rajdhani pass to the power house, with an installed capacity of 330 MW, just near Bandipora, operating under a head of 632 m. The annual generation from the project will be 1,460 MUs.

The state has in the pipeline ten more attractive investigated projects which are: Uri (280 MW), Sewa-II (120 MW), Sawalkote (600 MW), Pakaldul (1,000 MW), Burser (1,020 MW), Parkhachak (60 MW), Ratle (170 MW), Naunatoo (400 MW), and Kirthai (750 MW) for implementation, with private investment, during the next fifteen to twenty years.

### Transport and Communications

In a landlocked state like Jammu and Kashmir, road transport is an indispensable means of communication for the regular distribution of essential and other commodities. Hence, the government has given the highest priority to the construction and maintenance of roads.

The last railhead for the state is located at Jammu. The railway line between Jammu and Udhampur, started in 1981-82, was expected to be completed by 1997-98. Rs 142 crores, with an addition of another Rs 50 crores have been spent on completing it. This railway line will be extended upto Srinagar at an additional cost of Rs 1,900 crores. This is expected to accelerate development, strengthen the communication network and generate considerable employment. Uptill now in Kashmir the main source of communication has been the network of roads.

Economic development of the state and access to the landlocked and unexposed areas is therefore, vitally dependent on roads. A total road length of 13,540 kms (surfaced and unsurfaced) had become available by March 1996. This includes state highways and major district roads. Of the 6,268 villages in the state, 3,962 villages were connected through roads by 1995. By the Eighth Plan, 228 additional villages are likely to be connected through the roads.



An alternative to the existing national highway connecting Jammu and Srinagar, known as the Mughal Road, is under construction and is likely to be completed in the Ninth Plan period. The road will link Shopian in the Kashmir division with Bafliaz in the Jammu division. It is estimated to cost Rs 17 crores, 50 per cent of expenses will be borne by the Central government. The Ministry of Surface Transport has sanctioned Rs 25 lakhs under the National Patrolling Scheme for the purpose of an ambulance and crane for deployment on the highway.

In the Kashmir Valley, timber bridges constructed decades ago are being replaced/reconstructed by concrete bridges in a phased manner. In Jammu also, weak bridges are being reconstructed besides the construction of new bridges. The major bridges completed in 1995 were Abdullah Bridge, Aishmuquam, Larkipora in Kashmir Valley and Kathua Bridge in Jammu division. Other bridges under construction are Pul-Doda Bridge in Doda, Sher-i-Kashmir Bridge, Poonch fly-over project, Jammu, Wagoora, Vailoo, Hillar, Pahoo and Biddar Bridges in the Valley and Kali Dhar Bridge in Rajouri district.

Communication facilities have considerably expanded with the opening of new telephone exchanges, extension of existing lines and the establishment of direct-dialling services between Srinagar and Jammu, Srinagar and Delhi, Jammu and Delhi, and between Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramulla. This service has been extended upto Bombay and other important towns in the country.

A new radio transmitter of much greater power has since been installed in Jammu, and the Srinagar station has been further strengthened. A radio station has since been set up in Leh. The TV station in Srinagar, catering to a population of 20 lakhs, has become very popular. Similar is the case with the Jammu TV station. Many of their special programmes, reflecting cultural activities of the state, are telecast from other TV stations in India.

A project for setting up a marshalling yard-cum-work-

shop complex at Srinagar involving a cost of Rs 4.70 crores has been cleared while the first phase of a similar complex at Jammu is nearing completion. A new complex for the state motor garages is under consideration.

### Industrial Development

Though the state is comparatively backward in the industrial sector, the scope for large and heavy units being limited because of topographical and other factors, there has been steady progress in the development of the small-scale sector, for which there is tremendous scope.

Jammu and Kashmir Small-scale Industries Development Corporation Ltd was started in 1975. The total number of small-scale units has increased from 28,168 in 1989-90 to nearly 36,000 in 1995-96. In 1994-95, 117 beneficiaries were provided incentives amounting to Rs 2.34 crores for small-scale units. The main objective of the Corporation is to aid, counsel, assist, finance, promote and protect the interests of small-scale industrial units in the state.

J & K Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organisation Ltd was set up in April 1977 as a subsidiary of the Industrial Development Bank of India. The prime objective of J&K ITCO is to provide a package of consultancy services to tiny, small and medium-scale industrial units, both existing and prospective, as well as to render assistance to various state-level banks, institutions. To further promote and develop industry in the state, the J & K State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd was floated in 1969 as a special agency fully owned by the state government.

A number of industries have been commissioned in the large and medium sectors, for the government is conscious of the important role that the development of industries has to play in different areas of the state. The Rs 2 crore Hindustan Lever synthetic detergent plant, and the Rs 48 lakh New Joinery Mill have gone into production, besides other units like a cigarette factory and the present concrete



factory at Bari-Brahamana industrial complex at Jammu. Spread in 2,400 kanals of land, this complex has been humming with industrial activity.

Backward and hilly areas are receiving special attention with regard to the development of handloom weaving, leather tanning and other local crafts. Trainees from these areas are receiving loans of Rs 2,000 each for installation of looms. Their marketing problems are taken care of by the J&K Small-scale Industries Development Corporation, which had set up a target of training 10,000 carpet weavers in five years, that is from 1977. The production of carpets, for which the international demand is on the increase, has been extended substantially by these and allied measures. Carpet exports alone earned for the country a foreign exchange of Rs 13.20 crores in 1994-95. As for the handloom sector, the Corporation arranges raw material for looms at different interest rates. It is also marketing 50 per cent of the bulk product in the first instance. The weavers are being organised for production of export-oriented hand-woven cloth.

Sericulture is one of the oldest industries in the state. There are two big silk factories, one in Srinagar and another in Jammu. The total silk production in 1994-95 was recorded at 7.5 lakh kgs. The major thrust is the production of quality cocoons for remunerative prices to the farmers. The Srinagar factory alone manufactures about 300,000 m of various types of silk fabrics, georgette, parachute and suiting. The Government Woollen Mills at Srinagar is another established manufacturing unit: it has 2,018 woollen and 1,576 worsted spindles.

Handicraft being the traditional industry of the state has been receiving top priority in view of its large employment potential and also demand of handicraft goods both within and outside the country. Handicraft production includes mainly papier maché, wood carving, carpets, shawl making, embroidery, etc. This industry, particularly in carpets, earns substantial foreign exchange. The production turnover of handicraft goods was Rs 250 crores in 1995-96

and the export estimated at Rs 150 crores.

The Handloom Development Corporation is producing woollen items like tweed, blazer, blankets, shawls, *dhusas*, Kani shawls, etc. According to a survey in 1987, the number of handloom weavers in the state was estimated at 36,827. Thereafter, the number of weavers is estimated to have risen annually by 2,000, raising the employment of the industry to about 47,000 by 1992-93. Handloom products worth Rs 23 crore were produced in 1995-96. The number of small-scale industrial units which was 28,165 in 1989-90 rose to 36,675 in 1995-96, providing employment to 1.55 lakh people.

The setting up of the Hindustan Machine Tools unit has been a pace-setter for the large-scale industrialisation of the state. Both the HMT and the Indian Telephone Industries have expanded and diversified their production at Srinagar—their annual total production having since crossed Rs 20 crores. The Jammu region is not lagging behind. Three rosin and turpentine factories were set up at the Bari-Brahamana complex in the private sector; also, a modernised rosin and turpentine factory at Miran Sahib in the Jammu division. Two slate pencil manufacturing units and a wool combing project were commissioned at Bari-Brahamana. Thus, a new climate for all-round industrial development has since been created in the state.

Industrial activity is, however, mostly concentrated in the two main cities—Srinagar and Jammu—and their surrounding areas. Determined efforts are made, as mentioned, to decentralise industrial growth, this being the guiding principle in setting up of the District Industries Centre. A scheme for infrastructure development of industrial units has been formulated for Battal Balian, Udhampur at a cost of Rs 5 crores. In the process, backward districts such as Doda-Rajouri, Poonch and Leh/Kargil, have since started coming on the industrial map of the state. Industrial activity is spread over all categories but the bulk of units is engaged in agro-based activity.



## Forests

Kashmir, known all over the world as 'paradise on the earth', has the finest forests in the country. The abundant forest wealth of the state is spread over 21,307 sq km, which includes 718.15 sq km of sanctuaries and game reserves. A rich variety of conifers such as fir pine, spruce, deodar, *chir*, *kali*, etc., grow in the forests. Special attention is being paid to the promotion of forest research and preservation, and making up the losses on the dwindling species. The phenomenon of growing urbanisation and pressure on land, compounded by reckless felling of trees, has, however, resulted in forest resources becoming practically extinct.

The emphasis has therefore shifted from production to conservation and improvement of natural forests by bringing more areas under afforestation and under regular scientific management. During the Seventh Plan, an amount of Rs 3,882 lakhs was spent on the development of forests. Against the target of 44,000 hectares under different plantation components, the recent achievement has been 46,300 hectares.

The Game Preservation Department has since been reoriented and the Central Wildlife Act made applicable to the state with effect from 1 January, 1979. The Act forbids illegal felling of trees and ensures the preservation of the ecological balance in the forests and game sanctuaries, like the one at Dachigam in Kashmir.

Forests, which constitute 14.50 per cent of the state's total geographical area, play a key role in maintaining the ecological balance. The disturbed conditions in the state have also resulted in felling of trees by some unscrupulous elements. Conserving this green gold has become more important in view of the dwindling forest resources.

The government has taken several measures for rehabilitation of degraded forests and also enlisted public co-operation in it. The use of forest land for non-forestry purposes has been prohibited by the Forest Conservation Act, 1992.

The World Bank-aided Social Forestry Project launched in 1982-83 has helped in raising plantations on a massive scale. Over 1.11 lakh hectares of land has been brought under the project by planting 22.93 crore plants by March 1994. During 1994-95, more than 62 lakh plants were planted under different components of the project over an area of 7,795 hectares of land. Over 14.30 crore plants were distributed among the farmers under the Farm Forestry Scheme alone under this project. At present, the project is being implemented in the state sector.

A new concept of Joint Forest Management (JFM) has been introduced and village forest committees have been formed in 600 villages. These committees enjoy legal status and are becoming extremely useful in preservation of forest wealth to a large extent.

Nearly 7,000 hectares of state and forest land has also been covered under different soil conservation schemes during the first three years of the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

### Education for All

Jammu and Kashmir is the only state where education is free up to the university stage. Unique features of the educational programme, since Independence, are that free education has been brought within the reach of even the poorest sections of the population and far-flung and isolated areas of the state are dotted with different schools and colleges. Seasonal schools have been opened for people in the hilly areas and for the scheduled castes.

And, yet the state is educationally backward. Against the national literacy rate of 44.18 per cent for males and 19.55 for females, the state has a literacy figure of only 26.67 per cent. As such, the state government has been giving special attention to the expansion of the educational infrastructure.

On the technical education side, there are two regional engineering colleges in the state. In addition, there are four polytechnics to impart vocational training.



With the explosion of knowledge and information base, the techniques of imparting education and the educational technology have assumed the veneer of relevant planks of educational planning strategy. In this backdrop, district institutes of education have been opened in all the districts of the state to provide extensive and intensive training to the teachers.

Physical education constitutes the core element of the educational strategy with a view to lay a strong foundation for the mental development of a child and also for fructification of his inner urges and aspirations through development of his physique. Thus, the physical education programme has been introduced in higher classes in the state. During the Eighth Five-Year Plan period, physical education has been made a compulsory subject at the primary level.

### Health Service

In the development programmes for health, instituted since Independence, special emphasis has been laid on the eradication of various diseases like malaria, small-pox, trachoma, leprosy, tuberculosis, etc. Apart from controlling these diseases, the health infrastructure has been extended to far-flung areas, under the Mother/Child Health Care and Family Welfare programmes, providing health care at the doorsteps of the people.

To enable the people to lead a healthy life, the expansion of health cover, specially in the rural areas, is listed as one of the minimum programmes of development. This is being effected by the expansion of medical facilities and increase in the number of hospitals.

The state has made considerable progress in the field of medical education. There are two medical colleges, one at Jammu and the other at Srinagar. Besides, a full-fledged medical institute (namely Sher-i-Kashmir Medical Institute) is functioning at Soura, in Srinagar. The institute has a 600-bed complement and provides facilities for post-graduate

medical education and medical research.

### Social Welfare

The Social Welfare Department of the state has been concentrating on the welfare of the so-called backward classes and other weaker sections of the society. For imparting training to the members of the scheduled castes and the backward classes in weaving, leather technology, wood work, tailoring, knitting and embroidery, the government has set up eight technical institutes in the state. The Social Welfare Department is also running nearly 200 community social welfare centres in Jammu and in the Kashmir division. Condensed courses in tailoring and embroidery are imparted to members of the backward classes at these centres. There are two residential institutes for the blind, one each in the Jammu and Kashmir regions.

At present, many hostels are functioning in the state for providing free boarding, lodging, health care and coaching facilities to the Gujjar and Bakarwal students.

The national family planning programme, started with two centres in the main hospitals of Jammu and Srinagar, in 1957-58, was followed by the establishment of the Regional Family Planning Training Centre in 1967. The family welfare programme is entirely voluntary in the state but emphasis is laid on field-based activities.

The welfare of government employees, especial at the lower rungs, is particularly looked after. Another aspect of welfare is the generation of employment opportunities. Special facilities were provided to technocrats and unemployed graduates in the recent annual plans for setting up small-scale units. The welfare and development efforts of the state government are being supplemented through the Central development investments to help solve the problem of the educated unemployed. Then there was a special ad hoc problem like the rehabilitation of 18,000 residents of the Chhamb area in the Jammu region, displaced in the 1971 conflict with Pakistan, which has proceeded smoothly



under the central body, the Chhamb Displaced Persons Rehabilitation Authority. Small-scale industrial units set up in far-flung areas under the Rural Industrial Programme have a pronounced welfare bias. The units include handloom weaving, oil crushing, leather tanning, shoe-making, auto-workshop, bakery, wax candle-making, etc. Jammu and Kashmir has been declared as a special category state along with nine other states in the country, on grounds of financial imbalances being faced by the state and its overall backwardness. In terms of Plan assistance, this has given the state a more favourable ratio of grant and loan. The ratio of grant to loan is 90:10 in special category states as against 30:70 for the others.

### Ladakh—A New Look

A backward area, about which it used to be said that time stood still in this Shangri-la, the region of Ladakh has happily emerged from its centuries-old inertia with a progress chart of all-round development, for more than a decade.

A massive programme of economic reconstruction and development, started in 1964, has made available the benefit of progress to the people of this isolated area. The opening of the Srinagar-Leh road was a landmark insofar as it threw open the remote region—one of the world's highest habitations—to the currents and cross-currents of modernity and socio-economic change. The air service connecting Leh with Srinagar and Chandigarh was also a marked development in speedy communication as well as in aeronautical telecommunication.

Ladakh has received special attention in the planned development schemes of the state. In the Fifth Five-Year Plan of the state, the total allocation for Ladakh was Rs 18 crores. The approved outlay for the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) for Ladakh was Rs 4,590 lakhs. Besides, an outlay of Rs 198.40 lakhs was provided to Leh district under the Eighth Finance Commission Award. Power is the priority

sector in the Plan for development of Ladakh. Provision of better and stable infrastructure for the development of the region, larger allocations for development of communications, power supply and irrigation facilities, continue to be broad features of the development programme in the Seventh Plan.

About 90 per cent of the population of Ladakh is dependent on land for its livelihood. The principal crops in the region are barley, gram and wheat. The total area under cultivation is mostly artificially irrigated. The yield of wheat and barley has shown considerable increase as a result of the introduction of improved varieties of seeds. The Department of Agriculture has set up four agricultural farms, one each at Nubra, Changam, Saspool and Kargil.

Experiments in the introduction of potato cultivation have proved successful. 'Hot house' experimental farming—utilising steam from geo-thermal reserves in growing vegetables—has proved successful at Chumathang, 737 km from Leh. Both tropical and winter vegetables—including cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, chillies, etc.—unknown erstwhile in the arid region—were cultivated, after the geo-thermal reserves had been found by the Geological Survey of India. If this experimental farming catches up, Ladakh may well turn into a blooming farm, yielding vegetables in abundance. Horticultural experiments—introducing apples, apricots, grapes and pears—have also met with success, and, orchardists are provided subsidies to lay new orchards.

Canals are being laid to develop the possibilities of irrigation, which would promote the future development of forests, agriculture and animal husbandry. Various canal projects have been completed, among them the 49-km long canal from Upashi to Leh, which will irrigate 6,075 hectares. The most ambitious of these projects is the Rs 14-crore Stykna hydel project on the Indus river, about 20 km from Leh, which provides electricity and has also increased agricultural production through irrigation of land. The



electric supply at Leh and Kargil, since augmented, will receive a boost from the Stykna project, and more villages will be electrified.

The progress in the field of education is apparent from the fact that almost every village in Ladakh has a school now. Educational facilities up to the primary level are available even in remote areas. Ladakhi, the mother tongue of the region, has been introduced as an elective subject for the matriculation examination. As for health service, there are two full-fledged hospitals at Leh and Kargil, besides a dozen dispensaries and an equal number of maternity and child welfare centres; a decade ago, there were only two dispensaries in the province.

To add to the existing livestock population, a number of cattle and other breeding farms have been set up at Shamsa, Nubra (for yak breeding), Mathoo (Russian Merino farm) and Kargil. The famous Ladakhi goat, that provides the *pashmina* wool for shawls, is being bred with the Angora goat—the cross to yield better and more *pashmina* wool. Likewise, the Russian Merino sheep, with their high wool offtake, are being crossed with the hardier local variety. A poultry research-cum-production project has done well at Khaltsi. /

For the first time, people of Ladakh were given representation in the State cabinet in 1975. Thus, adequately represented on the government as well as in the state assembly, Ladakh has been wearing a new look, the pace of overall development and socio-economic transformation accelerated by the Ladakhis' robust faith in a bright future. The importance of Ladakh as a tourist resort increased considerably after it was thrown open to tourists in 1975.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS

Kashmir is known throughout the world as much for its arts and crafts as for its scenic beauty and bracing climate. These have catered to the artistic urge of the people in India and abroad. The products of unique craftsmanship, for which the unrivalled environs of the Vale set against the snow-clad mountains have provided the perennial inspiration to the craftsman, have won the appreciation of connoisseurs from far and near. The diverse articles range from woollen textiles of fleecy soft texture and matchless excellence in weaving, handwoven carpets of finest warp and weft, to the exquisite designs worked on papier-maché, wood work, silverware, etc. The handicrafts executed in the cottages play an important part in the economy of the state. Tourists form the largest clientele of the cottage industries. Besides, the products are marketed through government emporia set up in the state and the rest of India.

The motifs drawn by the *rumqqash* (the designer) rival the diverse natural beauty, abundant in the magnificent surroundings of the spacious Valley, and are inspired by the sparkling lakes and tarns, the broad curves of the serpentine Jhelum, the variegated flora and fauna as well as the breathtaking colours of the skies at the sunrise and sunset over the azure mountains. He also draws upon the poetic fancies and religious or philosophical themes, portraying these attractively in his designs. The deft handiwork of the craftsmen with the brush, chisel and needle, complete the products which have delighted



the world from time immemorial.

### Shawls

A unique position among Kashmir textiles is held by the celebrated shawl. The shawl industry is as old as the hills. The Mughals reorganised the industry. Akbar and his successors wore shawls of Kashmir. After Napoleon presented a rare shawl to Empress Josephine, shawls became the craze of the day in France. A shawl is seen over the shoulders of the famous Mona Lisa. "This fine, silky web of wool," says Larousse, "worked with fanciful flowers, distinguished by the tints of its colours, its singular designs, those strange plums draped in shapes of great varieties, those borders formed of tortuous lines crossing each other in endless devices, all combine to inspire, at the very sight of a shawl, those who see it, with a desire to possess it." In *The Marriage Contract*, Balzac has referred to 'white Cashmere'.

The process of shawl-making is fascinating from the start. Assiduously, women sort out the lustrous, rough substance from the smooth fleecy wool of the Kel goat, and then ply it over a *charkha* (handloom) of the indigenous type, while chanting folk-songs. This fabric, called *pashmina*, takes two forms on the loom: the loom shawl (entirely woven on the loom) and the embroidered shawl, which is woven with an embroidered pattern. The celebrated 'ring shawl' has been given the popular name, because it can actually pass through a ring. Rare and different from the others is the Jamavar shawl. In this case, the threads of the warp and weft are dyed before weaving. The peculiar charm of this famous shawl is derived from the symphony of colour schemes depicting architectural and mythological figures interwoven with landscape designs.

A high-class shawl is expected to have the designs worked evenly on both sides. The price of a *pashmina* shawl may range anywhere from a few hundred rupees to thousands of rupees, depending upon the craftsmanship and

the time factor involved in its creation. Be it said to the credit of the shawl-makers of Kashmir that the fine shawl of Kashmir has not been successfully made elsewhere, though attempts were made since the British days in India and in Britain itself.

### Carpets

The *namda*, felt rug, made from beaten wool, which is then embroidered over, is an important branch of the *kasida* industry of Kashmir. Its manufacture has been the proverbial boon to the poorer people of the Valley. The worker can prepare two *namdas* a day, with the help of three persons. Fine embroidery makes the *namda* sometimes more attractive for decorative purposes than a pile carpet.

The *gabba*—a unique type of floor covering, prepared from old woollens in a variety of forms and designs—comes next to the *namda* industry, and its manufacture is localised at Anantnag (Islamabad). Baramulla specialises in printed *gabbas*. Rich blending of colours gives the old material a new appearance, and the finished product, attractive as well as cheap, is suitable for use as *divan*-spreads, bedding material and even drawing-room rugs. The *gabba* industry (more a home industry than a cottage industry) is a valuable asset from the economic point of view, for it makes profitable use of waste materials. The chain-stitch rug, which resembles the *gabba* carpet, is also manufactured economically, as the base is hessian cloth and coarse wool, over which floral and other motifs are worked.

The carpet industry, introduced into the Valley by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, is justly renowned. From the point of weaving, carpets are broadly divided into two classes: smooth-faced carpets and pile carpets. Pile carpets (*kalins*), made in Kashmir since the Muslim rule, attained great perfection. Worked with floral and other designs, the handwoven pile carpet became the national craft of Kashmir, thanks to the excellent indigenous wool which constitutes its foundation. The carpet industry flourished under



Sikh rule. During the British days, the Europeans provided further impetus to the industry, introducing Iranian motifs. As of now, the Kashmiri carpet can match the Iranian or any foreign make, and is high on the export list of Kashmir.

Kashmiri carpet craftsmen, mostly stationed in Srinagar, present an interesting spectacle, when the master craftsman orally directs the colour pattern and the rest skilfully ply coloured yarn balls. The origin of the magnificent colour schemes of Kashmiri carpets is traceable to the Elysian background of nature of the Vale. Besides, the flora and fauna of different lands—Kashmir, Central Asia and Iran—are depicted on the carpets of Kashmir in a harmony symbolic of traditional synthesis of Kashmir's diverse cults and cultures.

### Embroidery

The embroidery of Kashmir, called *kasida*, is world-famous. Varied, rich in colour, elaborate in detail and exquisite in execution, the *kasida* patterns are freely drawn by the *naqqash* mostly from memory. The finest *kasida* work, particularly embroidered on shawls or saris, has no 'wrong' side. The connoisseurs set great value by embroidery which displays the same fineness of work on both sides of the material.

The chain-stitch is also used for the making of a large number of miscellaneous articles such as bags, screens and cushion covers. These find a ready market abroad. Embroidery on wearing apparel, whether of cotton or silk, is in constant demand, and has vast possibilities of expansion. Responding to demands, from babies' clothes to dressing gowns, the embroiderer of Kashmir is highly sensitive to current demand and keeps on producing a number of goods required for decorating a modern house, like household linen and upholstery articles prized by housewives.

### Silver and Copperware

Kashmir's silverware compares favourably with that turned out by the most fashionable establishments in London and

Paris. Both plain and engraved work is executed to cater to the differing tastes of buyers, which include many American tourists. The range of silverware is indeed wide: silver tea-sets, flower vases, toilet sets, scent chests, ornamental picture-frames, cigarette-cases, tumblers, etc. Among the flora and fauna, leaves of the *chinar* and the lotus furnish the popular patterns. Designs of the lilac, a popular flower of the Valley, are also wrought in silver.

The Kashmiri artisan also produces excellent products of copper-ware consisting mostly of cooking pots and *samovars* (tea-kettle of Russian origin) and sundry articles for the household or the mantelpiece. The copperware of Srinagar is admirably adapted for electroplating. There is a good demand for lovely copper trays inset into tables of carved walnut-wood, the carpenter working in co-operation with the deft coppersmith. Enamelled silver-work is also pretty. The smith of Ladakh prepares copper bowls, tea cups, jugs and trays—his exotic scenic environment impressed indelibly on his products.

Papier-maché craft, peculiar to Kashmir, was also introduced into the Valley by the great monarch, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who has been aptly called the Akbar of Kashmir. The products, beautifully painted over with ornamental patterns, comprise picture-frames, pen-cases, screens (which can vie with the Chinese counterparts), tables, tea-pots, writing sets, candle-sticks, handkerchief and tie boxes, vases, stamp boxes and other utility goods whose need is now fairly widespread. Green fields sloping towards the snow-capped mountains, sparkling streams running over rounded rocks, *shikaras* and lotuses blooming on the lakes, are the favourite papier-maché patterns. The craftsmen have introduced brass or metal-lining for the new style of papier-maché goods which makes them more durable and useful.

### Wood-carving

Walnut and *chinar* wood, abundant in Kashmir, provides



material for the wood-carving, which is among the best known cottage industries of Kashmir. The Kashmiri carver, second to none in the world in his skill as a designer, uses walnut wood—which is durable and has a rich natural-veined surface—to make excellent furniture and toilet articles such as chairs, cabinets, writing- or dining-tables, jewellery boxes and ornamental caskets, which are greatly appreciated. Some of the walnut wood products—cigar boxes and trays, table-tops, handkerchief and collar boxes—are delicately carved. Floral designs of almost every conceivable variety are made with great accuracy of detail in chased or raise work. Even without its colouring, it is easy to identify a flower. Some connoisseurs, appreciative of the dexterity of Kashmiri wood carvers, have commissioned them to make furniture of Victorian and other period styles. Some of the highly coloured and polished wooden articles look like lacquerwork.

### **Khatam-band**

*Khatam-band* is a speciality in Kashmir woodwork and comprises ceilings of rooms, made from thin panels of pine wood, cut into geometrical designs. Builders of houseboats have kept this old craft alive. In New Delhi, a representative specimen can be seen at the Santoor restaurant (the only restaurant in India specialising in Kashmiri cuisine, called *wazwan*) of Ranjit Hotel, where the houseboat decor of the place—creation of architect Shibani Ganju—is complete with *khatam-band* ceiling, interspersed by willow-work designs and the walls panelled with walnut wood covered with papier-maché *gabba* and Kashmiri jewellery ornamentation. In Kashmir itself, the shrine of Khwaja Naqshband, near the Jama Masjid of Srinagar, presents the best example of this craft, which is also found in Samarqand, Iran, Istanbul, Algiers and Morocco.

The Kashmiri is an intelligent and clever carpenter. The boats (flat-bottomed mostly) that he makes are of many sizes, and include the famous house-boats, the favourite

residence of summer visitors. The wicker-work industry is also notable. Lunch and flower baskets, chairs and tables and various other articles of common use are turned out in elegant designs. *Kangri*, the Kashmiri chafing vessel, its earthen bowl encased in wickerwork, is also made as an artefact ornamented with wicker rings and coloured mica for the mantlepiece.

### Jammu, Ladakh

There are other artistic industries too. The tanners of the state, whether living in Srinagar or Jammu, can turn out excellent leather. Leather saddles of Srinagar, *chappals* and sandals of Jammu, both worked over with artistic designs, are made to please and to last. Kishtwar specialises in blankets; Poonch, in spoons and forks made from unseasoned wood. Cotton printing has been a speciality of Samba, as also in the Jammu district, the printed Samba chintzes have a good market in and outside the state. The colourful cotton quilts from Mirpur, wooden ornaments from Thana Mandi and Kahna Chak, straw fans in many pleasing shapes, and artefacts made from bamboo, are other folk handicrafts kept assiduously alive in Jammu district.

The Ladakhi smith prepares copper bowls, tea-cups, jugs and trays, embellishing them with coloured semi-precious stones, his scenic environment impressed indelibly on the products. He also produces copper cooking-pots and tea-kettles. The Ladakhis have started working semi-precious stones and artificially produced pearls into jewellery pieces. Their knitted products, though roughly executed, are cosy to wear in the bitter cold of the long winter and are in great demand in the state.

The arts and crafts of the state are distinguished by time-old attachment to traditional techniques and methods. Some commercialisation has crept into the trade but the Quality Control Act, 1978, helped in removing complaints from buyers, and made the handicrafts more functional and lasting, as well as aesthetically superior. Though he caters



to jet-age tourists and the ever-increasing export demand, the craftsman of Kashmir has not been adversely affected by the ultra-modern trends. Whatever he makes with his hands bears lasting testimony to his infinite patience, coupled with the inspiration he derives from the panorama of nature of 'Eden of the East'.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS

"Ancient India has nothing more worthy of its early civilisation than the grand remains of Kashmir which though inferior to Palmyra or Persepolis in stateliness, are in position of beauty so immensely superior to either," wrote Dr E.F. Neve, many years ago. Besides impressive archaeological monuments like the ones at Martand, Avantipur, Srinagar, etc. in Kashmir, and at Babor and Billavar, in Jammu, the Valley contains unique remains of the full-fledged neolithic culture. About 15 km east of Srinagar, Burzahom, the well-known menhir site, has yielded remains of a neolithic life which vie with the rare finds in Pakistan at Mohenjodaro and Taxila. Traces of neolithic life have also been observed in the Valley from Anantnag to Pampur at Olchibag, Pampur, Panzgam, Begargund, etc.

### Neolithic Remains

The neolithic people in the first period of Burzahom, whose date has been tentatively fixed at 2500 B.C., were some sort of pit-dwellers. The pits, dug into *karewas* or lacustrine deposits comprising two groups, lower and upper, were plastered with mud, some provided with carved niches. Charcoal, ash and pottery were noticed in the interior of the pits. Tools of stone, such as polished hand-axes and harvestors, constituted the implements of the people. The second period of Burzahom reveals a more refined form. The period, unlike the previous one, evinces traces of disposal of the dead, in the form of burials. Both primary



and secondary burials were in vogue. Large menhirs were erected in the third period. Remnants of this period show well-turned out pottery, over and above the handmade articles. The neolithic phase of Burzahom has been placed between 2300 and 1500 B.C. The third period continued up to 2nd to 3rd centuries A.D. The ground and polished stone axes and bone-tools found at Burzahom have not been matched anywhere in north India or in the Deccan so far. But these implements, found in abundance in the south of the Krishna, Amaravati and South Arcot districts, may establish more relationship between this culture in the north (at Burzahom) and in the south of India. As for the bone-tools, these (numbering 2,000) were discovered for the first time in India at Burzahom.

The historical monuments belong to a later period, 3rd to 6th centuries A.D. at Harwan, and at Ushkur, 2nd to 5th centuries A.D. The importance of the Buddhist *stupas* and *chaityas*, whose foundations have been excavated at Harwan and Ushkur, lies in indicating the beginnings of architectural trends in Kashmir, though there appear solitary specimens of Buddhist settlements. The village of Harwan (ancient Sadarhadvana)—better known by the reservoir, nestling among wooded hills, a few km from the famous Shalimar (Mughal) Garden—has yielded archaeological remains, the only one of its kind in India. These consist of an aspidal temple with a courtyard surrounded by a wall, a building complex including a *stupa* and a *chaitya* (temple) and other enclosures constructed in pebble walls in mudplaster, as pebbles were in plentiful supply in this hilly terrian. To reinforce the pebble construction, untrimmed blocks of stone were put in at places. The aspidal temple was constructed in what is called the diaper-pebble masonry.

The *stupa* and a set of nearby rooms, corresponding in every detail to the *stupa* courts at Gandhara, were built in the later 'diaper-rubble' style, in which walls were made of irregular stones with intervening spaces filled with smaller

stones. The upper part of the *stupa* has disappeared. What remains of it is an open quadrangle, square in plan with a three-tiered base. Almost in ruins, the temple at Harwan is a large aspidal structure, square in front and round at the back. There is a spacious antechamber with a circular sanctum behind. The plan of the temple shows association with a Buddhist cult, which is underlined by the *stupa* in its vicinity, though of a later period.

The epoch-making excavations at Harwan also yielded a large number of moulded brick-tiles, of various patterns and shapes, testifying to a unique form of art, unrelated to any known art school. Unlike in other parts of India, where the sculptors portrayed gods and goddesses or the Buddha, here they depict the men and manners of the time and the habitat, particularly the flora and fauna. The motifs taking their inspiration from the sylvan surroundings are: lotus and other flowers in full bloom, geese flying in formation, cocks and rams in aggressive postures, archers shooting arrows at deer, a lady holding a flower-vase, another playing on a drum, naked beggars, etc., all depicted picturesquely. The patrons of the sculptured tiles seem to have been upper-class gentry who hunted deer with bow and arrow, lazed in the company of dancers and girls, chatted with them in balconies.

It is not possible to place the enigmatic people represented in these unusual tiles, though their rather heavy features reveal some resemblance with the people of the nearby regions of Yarkand and Kashgar. They certainly do not look like Kashmiris or any Indian race. With their striking cheek bones, small eyes, foreheads sloping back, they may have been un-Indianised Kushans or people hailing from some other similar tribe.

Brahmi characters on tablets have been discovered at Harwan near the *stupa*. Votive tables with a legend in the Brahmi script of the 4th century A.D., which may be contemporary with the *stupa*, add interest to the finds. It is important that not only are the historic excavations preserved but



extensive surface excavations are carried out to unearth more treasures of the past that could lead to firm conclusions about the chronology and significance of these neolithic and chalcolithic peoples.

### Various Influences

The archaeological finds of Ushkur, situated one km from Baramulla, are of a later date, the early medieval. It was a flourishing town in medieval times owing to its position on the main trade route between Kashmir and north-western India. A ruined *stupa* and terracotta sculptures found here have been credited to the post-Kushan period. The *stupa* appears to have been built over an old structure which might have belonged to the Kushan period. The heads of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, which predominate among the sculptures, are striking for the range of facial expressions, a trait that is common with the terracotta figures found at Akhnur, near Jammu. Some of the Akhnur finds are specimens of Harappan pottery, which set a new locale for the Sind valley civilisation. Akhnur, Harwan and Ushkur sculptors, counted among the most sensitive that India has produced, drew much of their inspiration from Buddhist Gandhara art. Their experiments in sculpture were considerably influenced by examples in the rest of India astir with creative activity under the great Guptas, whose sway and influence extended from Mathura to Sarnath. The importance of Harwan and Ushkur, however, lies in revealing the various influences that affected the architectural developments in Kashmir, particularly Greek, Roman and Byzantine.

The 'paradise of the Indies', that Kashmir has been called, is of great interest to archaeologists, and even lay tourists, for the impressive remains of its stone architecture which dot the Valley. The characteristic features of the architecture of Kashmir are lofty pyramidal roofs which act as safeguard against snow and rains, trefoiled doorways covered by pyramidal pediments, and great width of

individual columns in colonnades of imposing dimensions. The Buddhist Gandhara art influenced the early architecture of Kashmir, as already mentioned. More lasting was the later influence of Roman and Greek styles, particularly the latter, which is manifested in the close resemblance between the Kashmiri colonnade and the classical peristyle of Greece. The strong Greek influence, discernible not only in colonnades but in preaches and pediments, persisted for centuries, even after the medieval period, and to this extent, Kashmir architecture is distinct from the Hindu architecture of the rest of India. No wonder then that one of the names for the people of Kashmir in ancient India was *sastra-silpina* or 'architects' in commendation of their acknowledged skill in building arts. Hence, Sir Arthur Cunningham,<sup>1</sup> who first explored the archaeological remains of the Valley, characterised the Kashmiri style of architecture as 'Aryan order', to distinguish it from the more celebrated forms.

### Early Temple Architecture

The best specimens of early temple architecture are to be found at the temples at Shankaracharya, Ludov, Pravaresa and Narasthan. Perched atop the 304-m Takht-i-Sulaiman hill, commanding a marvellous view of the Dal lake and other environs of Srinagar, the Shankaracharya temple rests on a solid rock and consists of an octagonal basement of thirteen layers of stone 6 m high. The general shape of the temple is that of a cone and the whole of the structure is of stone, no cement having been used.

The date of the Shankaracharya temple has been a subject of controversy among archaeologists. Kalhana mentions a king named Gopaditya who built a shrine of Jyesthesvara on the Gopadri hill, the name of the hill during Hindu times. An authority, contemporary to Aurangzeb, ascribes the temple to Solomon, the cue taken from the

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, Sir A.: *An Essay on the Asian Order of Architecture as Exhibited in the Temples of Kashmir.*



Muslim name of the hill, *Takht-i-Sulaiman* (throne of Solomon). Abul Fazl<sup>2</sup> called it *Koh-i-Sulaiman* (mountain of Solomon). Sultan Sikandar did not raze this temple to the ground (as he demolished Martand and other edifices) because he thought (erroneously) that Mahmud Ghazni might have offered prayers inside it. In any case, by Mughal times the temple had already assumed the character of a legend, which would cancel Fergusson's view that the temple was built in the time of Jehangir. Fergusson was probably influenced by the two Persian inscriptions on a column of the inner sanctum, one of which belongs to A.D. 1644, that is, to Shah Jahan's reign. That these inscriptions are later interpolations is clear from Bernier's description of the temple (he accompanied Aurangzeb to Kashmir in A.D. 1665) as 'an extremely ancient building'. It is probable that the temple is a century or so older than Martand, the grandest specimen of Kashmir's early architecture, which the Shankaracharya temple shows in a still simple and experimental stage. Here is also found the early specimen of the horseshoe-shaped arch which attained the perfect trefoiled shape at Martand.

About 3 km from Pampur lies the temple of Rudresa at Ludov. In plan and other details, it is modelled on Gandhara structures and bears a close resemblance to the *vihara* at Guniyar in Swat valley. A simple cornice consists of three courses of projected filleted blocks, superstructured by the earliest form of a dome. The simplicity of the construction and lack of decorative details, like the Shankaracharya temple, indicate an early date. Hence, it has been placed between the Guniyar (5th century) and the Martand (8th century).

The temple of Pravaresa has been identified with the enclosure of the cemetery of Baha-ud-Din, and placed in the 6th century A.D. by Kalhana. In the same category are the ruins of the Ranaswamin temple which is now the *ziarat*

<sup>2</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, Tr. Jarret, Vol. II, p. 355.

(mausoleum) of Pir Haji Muhammad in Srinagar. These typify the medieval Kashmir temple with its vast court, surrounded by an enclosure of chapels, though still in a nascent form. The origins of the corner chapels of the front facade of Martand and Avantipura can be found in these structures.

These architectural concepts were further elaborated in the temple at Narasthan, 16 km north-east of Avantipura. Stylistically, it belongs to a later date than the Shankaracharya temple and earlier than Martand, for its pediment and arch-motif are more developed than the former. In general appearance similar to the temple at Ludov, the Narasthan temple is more imposing in its elaborate details. Nestling in the foothills of the Briangan range, the temple commands a fine view of a narrow valley, which feature also anticipates the incomparable view of the Martand temple.

### Martand: 'Architectural Lion . . .'

The advent of the Karkotas provided a great and lasting impulse to art and architecture, reaching its zenith in the rule of Lalitaditya Muktapida (A.D. 724-761). Regarded as practically the founder of the 'Aryan style' of Kashmir architecture, Lalitaditya is remembered as not only the builder of the world-famous Martand temple and the temples of Wangat, but the city of Parihaspura, where he raised imposing temples and *chaityas*. In most of these structures, Lalitaditya Muktapida evinced his Catholic taste in borrowing ideas fully from the more developed techniques in India, including Buddhist art and architecture. He also explored the styles of the countries to the north and west, particularly Greece, synthesising them into a vigorous architecture. It bore the impress of the personality of a conqueror-builder who was at the same time a lover of the arts and letters. Unfortunately, Parihaspura, the capital city that Lalitaditya built, is now a 'city of stones', in popular parlance. Nevertheless, the ruins of the two great temples of Parihasakesava and Muktakesava show vast enclosed



courts, surrounded by chapels bigger than the ones at Narasthan—a similar plan on which he built the Martand temple. These temples evince the Buddhist influence on the art and architecture of Kashmir which has been considerable. According to Ram Chandra Kak,<sup>3</sup> the Hindu temple of the best period in Kashmir was in broad outline “a *chaitya* built in the middle of a monastic courtyard”. Dr G.M.D. Sufi<sup>4</sup> is similarly of the view that the “outside appearance of most of the present-day shrines is not unlike that of Buddhist *pagodas*.”

Situated at a distance of 8 km from Anantnag, Martand<sup>5</sup>, the grandest of all ancient temples of Kashmir, has been styled as ‘the architectural lion of Kashmir’. The incomparable scenario of the temple is best put in the words of General Cunningham, who did a good deal of pioneering work in the study of Kashmir architecture: “It overlooks the finest view in Kashmir, and perhaps in the known world. Beneath it lies the ‘paradise of the Indies’, with its sacred streams and glens, its orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by vast snowy mountains whose lofty peaks seem to smile upon the beautiful Valley below. The vast extent of the scene makes it sublime, for this magnificent view of Kashmir is no pretty peer in the half-mile glen, but the full display of a Valley 48 km in breadth and 135 km in length, the whole of which lies beneath the ken of the wonderful Martand.”

The most striking in size and position among the archaeological remains of Kashmir, the Martand temple is not more than 12 m high but its solid masonry, with its elegant trefoiled arches and fine arcades symmetrically raised on a majestic plinth, offset by an imposing gateway which is of the same width as the temple itself, lends it a unique grandeur. The temple itself is 18 m long and

<sup>3</sup> *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.*

<sup>4</sup> *Kasheer.*

<sup>5</sup> *Martand* is the name of the sun god worshipped by the Hindus.

11 m wide; its height, when complete in the pyramidal form, may have been about 23 m. The courtyard that surrounds the temple is as elegant as the temple itself, measuring 66 m by 42 m. The central edifice stands in a large quadrangle, surrounded by a colonnade of fluted pillars, whose Grecian aspect is remarkable. There are eighty-four columns, an appropriate number in a temple of the sun, representing the product of the number of days in the week and the number of the signs in the Zodiac. The peristyle is the largest example of its kind in Kashmir.

The temple proper has three distinct chambers. The first, the outer chamber, is highly decorated. The middle chamber is also ornate, but the inner chamber is plain and is closed on three sides. The walls of the middle chamber are filled with single figures in relief, two of Surya (sun god) and two of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), one on each panel. There is also a well executed image of Ganga (the sacred river-goddess), standing upon a crocodile. The walls of the gateway are profusely decorated internally and externally. Most of the pedimented niches—the trefoiled arches being a characteristic feature of the Kashmir style, Indo-Hellenic or Gandhara in origin—contain single, standing figures of gods. These are but the remnants of this structure which must have been really grand at one time in its simple dignity and solidarity.

To the north-west of Srinagar, there are some ruined temples at Wangat, near the sacred spring of Naran Nag. The largest of the temples has been identified to be that of Shiva-Bhutesvara, built by Lalitaditya. Some of these temple ruins, enclosed in an unusually massive stone retaining wall are believed to rank next to the Shankaracharya temple in antiquity.

### Avantivarman's Temples

The architectural and artistic trends of the Karkota dynasty, which reached its zenith in the reign of Lalitaditya, attained a logical culmination under the Utpalas, who



followed the Karkotas. The two temples built by Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883) at Avantipur, about 29 km from Srinagar, on the Srinagar-Jammu road, though in ruins, are still extant. The first and larger is the Shiva-Avantipur temple, commanding a magnificent view of the broad bend of the Jhelum over a ridge. The extensive courtyard enclosed by a massive stone wall, the western face of which is adorned on the outside with a row of fluted columns, indicates that it must have been one of the best achievements in the field of architecture. The temple base, the only existing part of the main edifice, is 17 m square and 3 m high. The sanctum has been reduced to a mass of ruins.

The more ornate and better preserved temple of Avantivami-Vishnu, built at Avantipur, before he occupied the throne, comprises a spacious paved courtyard, a colonnaded peristyle in the centre of which is the main shrine, raised on a double base with four smaller shrines at the corners. All in all, the structure is a very complete conception, closely following the plan of Martand but adding nothing new to the architectural style, excepting the fact that this temple is a more refined product of art. The peristyle has a row of fluted columns on the west side. The front pilasters of the side-walls bear figures of Vishnu (the presiding deity) and his consorts carved in relief. The chief beauty of the temple lies in its cellular colonnade which consists of sixty-nine cells. The walled courtyard served as fortifications in parlous times that followed Avantivarman's reign, but the destruction of the temple was complete by the time of Sultan Sikandar in the 14th century A.D. The temples at Pattan—the Sugandhesa and the Samkara-Gaurisvara—were built during the reign of Sankaravarman (A.D. 883-902), son of Avantivarman, and closely resemble the Avantivami-Vishnu temple.

Not much of importance remains of the Kashmir style of architecture after the temples belonging to the period of the Utpala kings. No imposing monument like those of previous periods was raised thereafter. The temples of

this period—Bumazov, Kother, Payer, Pandrethan and Mamal—are comparatively mediocre. Among these, the small temple at Pandrethan (about five km to the south of Srinagar), built by Meruvardhana in the middle of the 10th century A.D., raised in an artificial tank, is a perfect specimen of the later Kashmir architecture. The temple is notable for its exuberance of decoration and the domed roof, overlaid with sculptures of classical design. Another temple of the same period which is also in a perfect condition is at Buniar, though its features are stereotyped. Other temples bear witness to the decline of the Kashmir style of architecture. A decadence seems to have set in the history of Kashmir archaeology from the 10th century A.D. "There is no new experiment in the field of art, but mere repetition of old formulae and technicalities. No imposing monument like that of the previous period is erected and there are very few sculptures."<sup>6</sup>

### Ancient Temples in Jammu

The principalities of Jammu, Kangra and Chamba were subjected to the influence of the Kashmir style of architecture, as is evidenced in the temple ruins at Babor (Babbapura of the *Rajatarangini*) and Billavar (ancient Villapura) in Jammu. The principal remains at Babor, about 58 km from Jammu, constitute seven temples, which have been identified from a Sharda script, to have been built in the 11th century A.D. The main temple is of "great solidity and considerable beauty, the chief features being a hall whose roof was held up by eight columns supporting beams of stone 10 feet in length." Carved ornamentation was a special feature of the stone edifice—characteristic again, of the Kashmir temple architecture. The Indo-Aryan style of these ruins is corroborated by Kalhana who referred to political, economic and cultural intercourse between the Kashmir Valley and these areas.

<sup>6</sup> Dr S.C. Ray: *Kashmir*, Publications Division journal, 16 July, 1962.



Ruins of the Devi's temple are to be found at Thalora, a village adjacent to Babor. Some of the rich carvings have survived on the portals of the sanctuary. One of these, still decipherable, is an exquisite figure of the river goddess, Ganga. It is still a moot point with archaeologists whether the temple is a Devi shrine or a Shiva temple.

About 104 km from Jammu, Billavar has a fine medieval temple, known as Billavakesvara. The temple dates back to the 11th century. According to Frederick Drew,<sup>7</sup> "the temple spire is profusely ornamented externally, the ornament consisting mainly of floral scrolls, flower and vase decoration and niches with stepped pedimental roofs filled with decorative lozenges and figures of gods." The temple contains a number of images including those of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (five-headed) as well as Ganesha and Bhairava.

These sculptures are remarkable for the intricate carvings on them. There is a water course at the foot of the hillock on which Billavar stands, and on it are more than a hundred springs surrounded by ruins.

The Krimchi temples, in the vicinity of the Udhampur area in Jammu, are said to have been built in the reign of the Kushan king, Kanishka, that is, around 1st century A.D. In shape (the lantern structure so characteristic of early medieval religious architecture) and style, these temples resemble the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar (Orissa). The main temple bears a close resemblance to ancient stone temples of Kashmir.

A cluster of temples in Basohli (132 km from Jammu) bear testimony to the great age of the complex. There are several sites of interest to the archaeologist around Basohli. These are remarkable for some outstanding temple architecture and sculpture.

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<sup>7</sup> Drew: *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories*.

### Islamic Architecture

Even before the advent of Muslim rule, the art of stone architecture in Kashmir had been already forgotten for a long time, in extended periods of political instability verging on chaos. Muslims introduced wooden architecture in Kashmir, though it had a vogue from ancient times, as is clear from the allusions in the *Rajatarangini* to Hindu and Buddhist structures of which there is no trace, owing to the impermanence of the material used. Though adopting the architectural style of their predecessors, the Muslim genius expressed itself in decorative motifs and the Arab concept of spaciousness, intimately associated with Muslim architecture.

The wooden architecture of Kashmir was patronised by the enlightened monarch, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (A.D. 1420-70). His court historian, Shrivara, who wrote the later *Rajatarangini*, mentions a long list of buildings that he constructed in 'brick and wood'. One of the oldest Muslim structures in Kashmir is the tomb that Zain-ul-Abidin built for his mother at Srinagar, near Zaina Kadal, the bridge that he had constructed and was named after him. Built in the typical Saracenic style, though the brick masonry shows Persian influence, the tomb, raised on the plinth of a demolished temple, is remarkable for the glazed tiles and moulded bricks of the dome and the cupolas. The mosque of Mian Sahib at Zadibal in Srinagar (also built by the same Sultan) stands out for its beautiful tile decoration. Sir John Nicholls<sup>8</sup> has characterised this tile work among the "most valuable antiquities which Kashmir possesses", adding that this was one among the three monuments in India where such tiles could be found.

In Kashmir's Islamic architecture, the tombs and mosques are mostly square structures. The walls are made of brick and mortar, sometimes of logs laid across each other. Timbers of the roof or ceiling are supported with

<sup>8</sup> Archaeological Survey of India, *Annual Report*, 1906-7, p. 161.



deodar columns, usually ornamented. With eaves projecting, the roof is held on a series of brackets and decked with carved bell-shaped tassels at the four ends. Window openings and balustrades are elaborately carved. The focal apex is the tall, graceful steeple rising above the structure, though the older buildings have lost their steeples and finials. Turf laid in birch bark covers the roofs, which retain waterproof properties and are overgrown with flowers and plants, in summer and autumn.

The medieval wooden style of Kashmir's Muslim architecture is best typified in the Khanqah mosque of Shah Hamdan in Srinagar, between the third and fourth bridges, on the right bank of the Jhelum. Sultan Sikandar built the mosque in A.D. 1395 to commemorate the visit of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, popularly known as Shah Hamdan. Twice destroyed by fire, the structure as it stands now, with cloisters added later, was rebuilt by Abul Barkat Khan in A.D. 1732. For the most part built of wooden balks, the intervening spaces were filled by very small and carefully dressed bricks. Some of the doors and windows are exquisite specimens of the Kashmir wood-carver's art at its best. The pyramidal roof culminates in a graceful steeple, rising 38 m from the ground.

The most 'architectural' structure in the wooden style of Kashmir is the Jama Masjid of Srinagar. Built by Sultan Sikandar in A.D. 1398 and enlarged by his son, Sultan Zainul-Abidin, it was rebuilt (after fires) and repaired by several kings, including Jehangir and Aurangzeb. The mosque, a huge structure containing all the essential components of the Kashmir type of wooden building, is a quadrangle, roughly square in shape, its northern and southern sides measuring 107 m. Four *minars*, one in the middle of each side, are covered by a series of pyramidal roofs. The compound is divided by two broad paths, planned after the pattern of a formal Mughal garden.

The Mughal emperors, and their governors, great lovers of the Valley gave a fillip to the art of stone building

in Kashmir, introducing the style then in vogue in Agra, Delhi and Lahore. Since Kashmir's own stone-building art was practically dead, Akbar had to import Indian master-builders to construct the wall around the Hari Parbat fort to enclose his newly founded city, Nagar-Nagar. The fort is a commonplace structure but the two imposing gates of the wall, *Kathi Darwaza* and *Sangin Darwaza*, are of architectural interest, the latter more ornate of the two.

The Pathar Masjid (stone mosque), opposite the Shah Hamdan mosque across the Jhelum, in Srinagar, is the largest surviving Mughal structure in Kashmir. Built in local grey limestone, the facade consists of nine arches, remarkable for their horizontal construction. This was the continuation of the true arch which revolutionised the architecture of Kashmir. Built in A.D. 1623 by Nur Jahan, the Pathar Masjid was, however, never used for prayers. Questioned about the cost of its construction, the Empress is said to have remarked superciliously: "As much as this", pointing to her jewelled slippers. When the high-priests heard this, they boycotted the mosque as a desecrated building. The construction was supervised by the well-known Mughal historian-architect of Kashmir, Malik Haider Chaudhury.

Beautifully situated on the western bank of the Dal lake, 8 km from Srinagar, is the Hazratbal mosque, which was built in the reign of Shah Jahan. An interesting blend of Kashmir and Mughal architecture, the mosque acquired sanctity when it became the repository of the Prophet's hair brought from Medina by Sayyid Abdullah in A.D. 1699; hence the name, *Hazrat-bal*: *Hazrat* (prophet) and *bal* in Kashmiri for a hair; it also means a bank or landing place. The number of pilgrims swells to thousands when the *moi muqadas* (as the holy relic is known) is exhibited for ten holy days after the Prophet's birthday. The brick masonry of the wall and portico, resting on a plinth of dressed stones, is remarkable.



## Mughal Gardens

Early Hindus and Buddhists specialised in landscape gardening and monks from Kashmir carried the tradition of gardening as far as China and Japan. It was left to the cosmopolitan Mughals to reintroduce the old Indian art, as it were, from their northern homeland to Kashmir, whose running brooks, green alluvial hill slopes and salubrious climate presented the ideal locale for laying out gardens that became world famous for their natural charm and unrivalled beauty of environment. Akbar, finding Kashmir resembling his original home in Turkistan, set about laying a garden at Nagin Bagh, which is in ruins now.

Jehangir and his art-loving consort Nur Jahan, laid out the world famous gardens at Nishat, Shalimar, Achabal and Verinag. Shah Jahan improved them, adding to Shalimar the last and best terrace, and making a small pleasure-garden around the spring at Chashma Shahi (royal spring), which Aldous Huxley described as "architecturally the most charming of the gardens near Srinagar".

Shalimar, the site of a villa called Mar-Shala (or the 'Hall of Love') in the time of Pravarsena II, the founder of Srinagar, not only testifies to the existence of a garden tradition in ancient Kashmir, but became a splendid venue for a pleasure garden; the veritable Versailles of the Mughal emperors. Arranged in four terraces of nearly equal dimensions, the Shalimar is 520 m long and 180 m broad. The magnificent black stone pavilion, 'a romance in stone', is the fourth terrace, used as a banqueting hall in the palmy days of the Mughals; it is surrounded by the beautiful reservoir, 46 m square. The Shalimar is connected with the Dal lake by an artificial canal.

Commanding a magnificent view of the Dal lake, the Nishat Bagh ('Garden of Bliss')—the most favoured resort of tourists—has the same length as the Shalimar but is much wider, and had twelve terraces, one for each sign of the Zodiac; now there are only ten terraces. As in the Shalimar, the beauty of flower-beds is enhanced by the fountain jets,

fed by limpid waters cascading down the terraces. The tanks and the canal are lined with polished stone. There are two pavilions, one at the lower and the other at the upper end of the garden. Giant *chinars* (plane trees), bordered by lines of cypresses, shade the walks which are beautified by green turf, studded with flower-beds.

Chashma Shahi, favourite with visitors for its famous spring of pure and cold water, is situated high up in a hollow of the Zabarwan hill and commands a lovely view of the lotus stretches on the Dal lake and Hari Parbat fort in the background. Comparatively a small garden, it has three terraces and the central aqueduct, tanks, waterfalls and fountains are fed by the sparkling water gushing out of the spring, from a lotus basin, with the same unfailing abundance as it must have in the great Mughal days.

It is said that there were as many as 700 Mughal gardens round the Dal lake but these are since extinct. Across the Dal lake lay the Nasim Bagh (the 'garden of breezes'), deriving its name from magnificent *chinar* trees. Its walls, canals and fountains have disappeared. The Kashmir University campus is there now, though some of the *chinars* remain. Facing the campus on the lake lies the *Char Chinar* island, named after the four *chinars* planted there by the Mughal prince, Murad, in A.D. 1641, when he was governor of Kashmir.

Situated 64 km to the south of Srinagar, the spring of Achabal (old Hindu name, 'Akshvala', from king Aksha), was selected by Jahanara, daughter of Shan Jahan, to lay a garden in A.D. 1620, 140 m long and 135 m broad. The waters of the spring, issuing from fissures, flow through the garden, traversed by three aqueducts lined with stone and abounding in fishes. Similarly, Jehangir drained the waters of the Verinag spring<sup>9</sup> (source of the river Jhelum) into an

<sup>9</sup> Jehangir loved this place so much that when he died on his way back from Kashmir, he expressed the desire that he should be buried at Verinag. Apprehending that mountain passes might get blocked, Nur Jahan and the courtiers decided otherwise, thus leaving Jehangir's last desire unfulfilled.



octagonal tank of sculptured stones. His son, Shah Jahan, constructed cascades and aqueducts in straight lines through a fine garden.

Besides the gardens, the Mughals built a number of mosques along the ancient route from Delhi to the Valley of Kashmir via Bhimber and Rajouri. A mosque of Jehangir's time survives at Rajouri. The Mughals actually built a number of *serais* on the route and these housed mosques and mausoleums.

In conclusion, it may be observed that architecture of Kashmir broadly effected the same synthesis of different trends and influences as has been a salutary feature in the spheres of religion, philosophy and literature. "Kashmir architecture," wrote Sir John Marshal,<sup>10</sup> "exhibits a fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideals... happy blend of elegance and strength," and is an "eloquent testimony to the enduring vitality of Hindu art under an alien rule and to the wonderful capacity of the Muslim for absorbing that art into his own and endowing it with a new and greater spirit."

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<sup>10</sup> *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 641.

## TOURISM

The natural beauty of the Vale of Kashmir has deservedly won high praise and even extravagant encomiums from travellers, since time immemorial. Hiuen Tsang, the well-known Chinese pilgrim, who travelled through India and Central Asia for sixteen years in the 7th century A.D., was captivated by the lovely Vale to spend two years there. Ou-Kong was the next Chinese traveller of note to visit the Valley in A.D. 759 and to stay on for four years. "Kailasa is the best place in the three worlds: the Himalayas are the best part of Kailasa, and Kashmir the best part in the Himalayas," wrote Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. In *Travels of Marco Polo* (Yule), there is a reference to Kashmir: "The men are brown and lean, but the women, taking them as bridgettes, are very beautiful. The climate is finely tempered, but neither very hot nor very cold."

### Down the Ages

The sparkling streams, the happy murmuring of myriad brooks, the limpidity of its sheet lakes and the sublime beauty of the mountain tarns, the splendour of snow-covered, sunny, flower-laden uplands and meadows—these and the variegated beauty of the flora and fauna were variously described by the travellers and others whose accounts of the manifold charms of the Vale make for fascinating reading.

Around 300 B.C. Chandragupta Maurya allowed 30,000 Greek soldiers and 20,000 mercenaries under Antiochos,



son of Seleukos Nikator, to slip into the Kashmir Valley. A stratagem of war, it was to compel the Greeks into submission later, after sealing the exit passes from Kashmir. Diophantes, sister of Antiochos, fell in love with the Valley immediately on seeing it and shouted with joy: "This is a veritable paradise, and these lakes, oh, ravishingly beautiful!" Later, when she got to know from her brother that the passes were closed and they could not leave Kashmir, she said: "Let us go on camping here. This land is more beautiful than any other I know." She was given away by Seleukos in marriage to Chandragupta Maurya, to cement the treaty of peace with the Mauryan conqueror; she was renamed Devabrantha. A later-day footnote to this historic episode is tongue-in-the-cheek observation by James Milne:<sup>1</sup> "Alexander the Great passed here, leaving behind enough Greek soldiers to assure Kashmiri women of lovely profiles and often white skins."

The Mughal scholar, Alberuni, who flourished at the court of Mahmud Ghazni (A.D. 996-1031), wrote an account of Kashmir which is fuller than those he wrote about other parts of India. An Iranian poet, Toghra of Isphan, delineated Kashmir:

Tell me what land can boast such treasures,  
Is aught so fair, is aught so sweet?  
Hail! Paradise of endless pleasure!  
Hail! Beautiful and beloved Kashmere!

### A Garden of Eternal Spring

A lover of nature *par excellence*, Jehangir made a number of sojourns to Kashmir to fly "from power and pomp and the trophies of war", as the Irish poet, Thomas Moore, put it in *Lalla Rookh*. Jehangir admittedly loved Kashmir more than any other province of the Mughal empire. In the Valley's love haunts, many of which he and his beautiful consort

<sup>1</sup> Milne, James: *The Road to Kashmir*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1929.

Nur Jahan beautified with Mughal gardens and other constructions, the royal lovers found abundant opportunities to indulge their passion for nature and to feast their eyes and ears on the incomparable sights and sounds that the terrestrial paradise alone could vouchsafe them. Some of the most florid passages in Jehangir's memoirs, *Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri*<sup>2</sup> record the beauties of the Valley, like this one:

As I had repeatedly heard praise of the *ilaq* of Kurimarg (Gurais valley), I felt much disposed to visit it at this time, and on Tuesday, the 7th *Amurdad* (July), rode in that direction. How shall I write its praise? As far as the eye could reach, flowers of various hues were blooming, and in the midst of the flowers and verdure beautiful streams of water were flowing; one might say that it was a page that the painter of destiny had drawn with the pencil of creation. The buds of hearts break into flowers from beholding it. Undoubtedly, there is no comparison between this and other *ilaqs*, and it may be said to be the place most worth seeing in Kashmir.

Jehangir's principal pastime was observation and collection of flora and fauna, for which the side valleys and upland meadows provided him ample scope. He recorded his impressions:

If one were to take to praise Kashmir, whole books will have to be written. . . Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring. . . a delightful flower-bed, and a heart-expanding experience for *derveshes*. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet and the narcissus grow of themselves; in the fields, there are all kinds of flowers and all sorts of sweet-scented herbs, more than

<sup>2</sup> From the standard literal translation by Rogers and Beveridge.



can be calculated. In the soul-enchancing spring, the hills and plains are filled with blossoms. The finest inflorescence is that of the almond and the peach. . .

### Turkey of the Indies

In *Travels of Sebastian Manrique* (1629-1643), the author describes "a sumptuous royal palace" on "a famous lake six leagues round" (the Wular lake), and adds, "large numbers of geese and ducks frequent these aquatic meadows".

Other 17th-century travellers described the capital city and its lake and other environs like, Pelsaert (1626) and De Late (1631), the latter admiring the island palace in the midst of the Dal lake. Thevenot (1684) says: "Cashmir was called Turchina, that is to say, the India of the Turks, or the Turkey of the Indies." Giving the location of "the town of Cashmir, which bears the name of the province, and which some call Syrenaquer", Thevenot observed:

This little kingdom is very populous. . . It is full of lovely plains, which are here and there intercepted by pleasant little hills, and delightful waters; fruits it hath in abundance, with lovely verdures. The mountains, which are all inhabited on the sides, afford so lovely a prospect by the great variety of trees, amongst which stand mosques, palaces, and other structures, that it is impossible perspective can furnish a more lovely landskip. . ."

De Late's use of proper names is exotic: "Cassimere, Chismeer or Quexmir. The capital of the province is called Sirankar. . ."

### Paradise of the Indies

The most notable European to trek over the Banihal range from the hot plains and to leave a graphic record was Francois Bernier, a French physician, attached to the Mughal court at Delhi in 17th century A.D. He described "the modes

of travelling adopted by the king, the princesses and rest of the harem", as well as the magnificence and pomp of that vast army which wound its irksome and perilous way across the parched plains to the hills. Conferring on Kashmir the title 'Paradise of the Indies', Bernier wrote lyrically:

The numberless streams which issue from the mountains maintain the Valley and the hillocks in the most delightful verdure. The whole kingdom wears the appearance of a fertile and highly cultivated garden. Villages and hamlets are frequently seen through the luxuriant foliage. Meadows and vineyards, fields of rice, wheat, hemp, saffron and many sorts of vegetables among which are intermingled trenches filled with water, rivulets, canals, and several small lakes, vary the enchanting scene. The whole ground is enamelled with our European flowers and plants, and covered with our apple, pear, plum, apricot and walnut trees, all bearing fruits in great abundance.

Bernier gave a plus mark to Kashmiris: "The Kachemirys are celebrated for wit and considered much more intelligent than the Indians. The women especially are very handsome. . ."

In Mill's *India* (1744), we find the observation which reads like an unsolicited tourist advertisement of those days:

This province is encompassed on every side with mountains, but is itself a fine, fertile plain, through which innumerable little rivers descend from the hills, which, together with the northerly situation renders it mighty agreeable to the sunburnt inhabitants of the southern provinces. The complexion of the natives is not inferior to that of the Europeans, and the country is said to produce most of the fruits of Europe.

### A Province of Fairyland. . .

The Valley, ringed by the snows of the Himalayan range, a



jewel on the rim of Central Asia, attracted the pens of many travellers since Bernier. Some, like Forester, an officer of the Bengal Army, who passed through Kashmir in A.D. 1783 when Kashmir had fallen under the harsh rule of the Afghans, after the downfall of the Mughals, did not sound so sanguine, but the Vale was still a 'paradise' to the eye of the beholder. "Endeavouring to describe the natural beauties of a Valley, which, perhaps, stands unparalleled for its air, soil and a picturesque variety of landscape", Forester's first impression of "luxuriant imagery" of the vale at Veere Nag (Verinag) was: "No extraordinary warmth of imagination was required to fancy that I stood, at least, on a province of fairyland." He depicted the Shalimar which showed the "magnificence and taste" of "Jehang Gheer" and the "enchanting Noor Mahal" and praised "the rose of Kashmir, which, for its brilliancy and delicate odour, has long been proverbial in the east; and its essential oil or *attar* is held in universal estimation". The Kashmiris "may be termed a fair people, and their women in southern France or Spain would be called brunettes."

The first European to visit Ladakh was the Jesuit father, Hyppolyte Desideri (A.D. 1715), who left a detailed account of the places he visited. The flora and fauna of Ladakh as well as its rigours of climate were described by two Englishmen, William Moorecroft (A.D. 1822) and James Gilbern Gerard (1829), both belonging to the profession of medicine and in the employment of the East India Company.

Nearly a century-and-a-half ago, a distinguished botanist, Victor Jacquement, was deputed by the French authorities as a travelling naturalist to India and the East. He visited Chinese Tartary, Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley in A.D. 1830-31. His monumental collection of data published after his death in six quarto volumes added considerably to the stock of knowledge on flora and fauna. Letters which Jacquement wrote to his relations and friends from Kashmir, record in everyday language much of what

he had noticed and experienced. In one letter, he wrote that his "health had quite recovered by the healthy climate" and "in a month's time I shall be eating cherries from my garden, next apricots, then peaches and almonds, then pears and apples and last of all grapes..." In another epistle, he listed an inventory of artefacts he would bring from Kashmir, concluding with this encomium for the shawl: "I should like to encase you, my dear, in a beautiful and immense morning gown of Cashmere shawl, well wadded, and I am persuaded that you would find the luxury very great of indulging in such a garment."

### Focus of Asian Civilisation

A lawyer-writer, G.T. Vigne, hailing from England, chose a life of travel and explorations and visited different parts of Kashmir including Skardu, Ladakh and Srinagar, leaving behind picturesque accounts. Few travellers have described better the curves of the broad-bosomed Jhelum:

The line of beauty was never more faithfully depicted than by the course of the broad and beautiful Jhelum, the 'fabulous Hydaspes' of the Augustan age. So regular, without being too much so, are its windings as it approaches the city from the southward; so just are the length and curvature of its sweeps; and so well-proportioned are its width, and the space it occupies to the extent of the rich savannah through which it flows; so tranquil and lake-like is the surface of the water, that at first sight, we cannot divest ourselves of the idea that nature has called the assistance of art, and has ornamented the scenery beneath us with reference to the most approved principles of landscape gardening.

C.R. Tollemache thus versified the beauty of the stately Jhelum:

A hundred miles of snow-clad mountain peaks  
On either side rear up their heads to heaven,



And, flecked with light and shade and yellow foam,  
Broad-bosomed Jhelum winds its stately way.

If Egypt has thriven on the bounties of the Nile, it is truer to affirm that Kashmir is a gift of the Jhelum. There is no other instance of a high altitude valley of the dimensions of Kashmir intersected by a broad river for over 80 km.

Characterising the Pir Panjal range as "a fitting boundary for the noblest Valley in the world", Vigne concluded (1842) with a veritable prophecy, over a century-and-a-quarter ago, that Kashmir would become a cynosure for sportsmen and other tourists of the world:

Kashmir will become the focus of Asian civilisation, a miniature England in the heart of Asia. The climate will permit the introduction of the sports and games of England, and presenting so many attractions, it will become the *sine qua non* of the oriental traveller, whether he be disposed to consider it as the *Ultima Thule* of his voyage, or a resting place whence he may start again for still distant regions.

### Truly Grand and Beautiful

A German baron, Charles Hugel, met Vigne and other European travellers in Srinagar in the winter of A.D. 1835. In his extensive travels, "the most wonderful objects in the world" which Hugel noticed were the Taj Mahal and Kashmir. After recording his impressions of the Mughal attractions in and around the Dal lake, Hugel penned a memorable picture of the incomparable view that one can have from the top of the Shankaracharya temple in Srinagar:

The massive construction and peculiar form of this edifice render it well worthy of a visit. The mountain is 1,200 feet (366 m) high; the view from it, over the whole Valley of Kashmir is indeed most truly grand and beautiful. Motionless as a mirror, the lake lies outstretched below, reflecting the vast chain of the

hills, while the extensive city is seen spreading along its shores; and the Jhelum winds slowly like a serpent through the green valleys, and to complete the scene, the lofty Pir Panjal, with its countless peaks of snow, forms on one side a majestic boundary.

### Lalla Rookh

It is interesting that Thomas Moore whose celebrated *Lalla Rookh* sang the beauties of the 'the Vale of Cashmere' in undying verse never visited Kashmir. He drew upon the travel accounts of Bernier and Forester and the memoirs of Jehangir. The immense popularity of *Lalla Rookh* in the middle of the 19th century provoked the curiosity of many travellers about Kashmir. An oft-quoted quatrain is:

Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere,  
With its roses the brightest the earth ever gave,  
Its temples and grottos, and fountains, as clear  
As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave?

The most superb view of the Valley, to be had from the top of the Shankaracharya hill at Srinagar, was depicted in these words by Tom Moore:

Day, with his banner of radiance unfurled,  
Shines through the mountainous portal that opens,  
Sublime, from the valley of bliss to the world.

### Last Look at her Mirror . . .

An army officer, Thomas E. Gordon, who was a member of the mission sent by the Government of India in 1873 to Yarkand, passed through the Karakoram, and described in the course of his book, *The Roof of the World* (1876), the Remu glacier:

With an even surface, wonderfully sea-like . . . this great Remu glacier stands unrivalled in its grandeur of extent and close resemblance to a frozen sea.



Recording the chronicle of a drive through the waterways of Srinagar, Lt. Col. Torrens, who came to the Valley with a party of six Englishmen in 1861, followed the fashion of the day by first quoting the famous line with which *Lalla Rookh* began: "Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere?"

While graphically describing the Dal lake and the boatmen, Torrens again quoted from Thomas Moore:

...The Takht-i-Soliman. . .rises from a green bed of gardens and orchards, and may be said, poetically speaking, to 'form one side of a grand portal to the lake'...The broad expanse of the lake opens out in front of us; and then its surface is so thickly covered with broad leaves and rosy surface of the lotus, and the tangled green of the *sinhara*, or water-chestnut, its sides so concealed by floating gardens, that it is difficult to form any idea of its size. The first glimpse is, however, enough to convince you of its beauty. . .

The day is now drawing to a close and we see the lake at its best—

At sunset when warm o'er the lake,

Its splendour at parting summer eve throws,

Like a bride full of blushes, when lingering to take,

A last look at her mirror at night when she goes.

The boatmen are quite alive to the beauty of the scene—though so common a one to them—for they love and are proud of their far-famed lake, gathering lotus flowers as they paddle homewards, they sing long ballads in praise of the loveliness of their Valley . . . beating time to their voices with the pleasant splash of the paddle.

### Supremely Beautiful

In the present century many writers—too numerous to be quoted here—wrote about the charms of the 'Valley of Happiness', as the old poets extolled Kashmir. The renowned

historians, Mount Stuart Elphinstone, Sir Walter Lawrence, Dr E.F. Neve and so many other Westerners, graphically described the land. How the 'loveliness of the land' can enthral and 'cast an enchantment' is best described in the lyrical, poetic prose of Jawaharlal Nehru:

Like some supremely beautiful woman, whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river and lake and graceful tree. And then another aspect of this magic beauty would come to view: a masculine one of hard mountains and precipices, and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below. It had a hundred faces and innumerable aspects, ever-changing, sometimes smiling, sometimes sad and full of sorrows. The mist would creep up from the Dal lake and, like a transparent veil, give glimpses of what was behind. The clouds would throw out their arms to embrace a mountain-top, or creep down stealthily like children at play. I watched this ever-changing spectacle and sometimes the sheer loveliness of it was overpowering and I felt almost faint. As I gazed at it, it seemed to me dream-like and unreal, like the hopes and desires that fill us and so seldom find fulfilment. It was like the face of the beloved that one sees in a dream and that fades away on awakening.<sup>3</sup>

### Tourist Industry

In a kind of historical spectrum, we have quoted enough in substance from accounts of travellers on the bewitching Valley to show how the lovers of natural beauty, down the ages, not only adored the bounties that nature lavished on

<sup>3</sup> Based on Pandit Nehru's twelve-day visit to the Valley in 1937, the article appeared in *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, in 1940. With Panditji's permission, the present writer prefixed it as the introductory essay to his first book on Kashmir, entitled *Kashmir: Eden of the East*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1945.



Kashmir but found these a fruitful theme of literature. One more quote from a 'Kashmirphile', who knew the Valley intimately, would not fill the cup of these deserved eulogies to the brim. "Who that has heard of it has not pined to go there?" wrote Sir Francis Younghusband,<sup>4</sup> adding lyrically, "Who that has gone there again, has not wished to remain there for ever?"

After the Banihal Cart Road, a veritable feat of engineering, was opened in A.D. 1918, and the first motor vehicles entered the Valley, gradually displacing the *tongas* and *ekkas* (horse-carts) that had been plying on the Jhelum Valley Road (opened in A.D. 1882), few people could have imagined that Kashmir would one day become a popular tourist resort, not only for Indians but for holiday-makers from distant lands. In the modern sense, Kashmir tourism began after World War I and has never looked back. Some stray figures of tourist arrivals speak for themselves: 1946: 27,158; 1954: 39,654; 1962: 93,000; 1966: 1,19,275; 1967: 1,46,081; 1973: 1,95,846; 1976: 3,93,000—including 37,000 foreigners (the total being double the number of 1975); 1977: 4,42,000, including 53,625 foreigners; and 1978: 500,125, foreigners numbering 58,449. There was a slight fall in 1979 but the number of foreigners was 54,233. The total was 6.42 lakhs in 1981, and by 1985, the number of tourists rose to 5 lakhs, and in 1987, to 7.20 lakhs: these included 57,500 foreigners. The figure rose to 7.50 lakhs in 1988.

No wonder then that tourism has become an important industry, vital for the economy of the state. By 1975-76, the earnings from the industry were of the order of Rs 15.33 crores, of which the foreign exchange element was Rs 2.17 crores; it was Rs 1.32 crores in 1970. The financial impact of Vaishno Devi pilgrimage in the Jammu province (five lakhs in 1976) is not counted in this projection. The number of Vaishno Devi pilgrims rose to 7,84,103 in 1977, 8,34,291 in 1978, and more than 18 lakhs in 1988 and registered a steep

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<sup>4</sup> Younghusband: *Kashmir*.

rise from 21.69 lakhs in 1990 to 40.12 lakhs in 1995. The same year, the number of pilgrims to Amarnath went upto 70,000 and 15 lakh pilgrims visited Shahdara Sharief, Rajouri.

The peculiar attraction of the mountain-girt Valley for the tourists is that it caters to every taste. It is at its best the year round, depending on the predilection and preference of the visitor. The Valley, surcharged with an atmosphere of calm tranquility, provides a fertile field for study to geologists, botanists and archaeologists. The angler finds plenty of scope for his rod. The sportsman finds ample game in the forests and along the verdant mountainsides. Those interested in water sports and bathing enjoy themselves at the Dal, Nagin and other lakes. There are also the mountain resorts at various altitudes—the upland meadows, called *margs*, sloping towards the magnificent snow-capped Pir Panjal range on the west and towards the greater Himalayas on the east, perched at heights ranging between 2,000 m and 4,000 m above sea level. Along with mountaineering, trekking can be indulged in—with camping out—at favourite resorts, old and new.

The Valley, practically one large health resort, is enchanting all the year round. The colourful flower season starts from the middle of March and April; May and June find fruit trees laden with many-hued carpets of flowers decking the meadows and hill slopes. June and July offer swimming, sun-bathing, surf-riding and trekking. August and September are good for fishing trout and mahseer in ice-cold mountain streams. Big and small game are to be found aplenty in September and October; there is autumn, the fruit season, which finds the Valley ablaze in red and russet. It is also a good time for trekking. December to February is the season for winter sports in Gulmarg.

Surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains and flanked by hills, lakes and the meandering Jhelum, Srinagar, the summer capital of the state and the first destination of tourists, wears a delicate look because of its *chinars*, poplars and willows. Well equipped to meet the tourist traffic at any



time of the year, it has a magnificent tourist centre as well as an exclusive five-star hotel, overlooking the Dal lake, that was once a palace. Tourist reception centres, catering to all types of tourists, are also located at Jammu, Kokarnag and Pahalgam.

The house-boats on the Dal and Nagin lakes, offering all modern amenities—and water sports—in the midst of the most beautiful scenery in the world have become world-famous. Few people know that it was a far-seeing Englishman, M.T. Kennard, who first conceived—and executed in A.D. 1883—the idea of a 'floating house'. Kashmiris used to call house-boats the "the boat of Kennath Sahib" for quite some time until the English word caught on. Gifted with an innate sense of beauty and design, the Kashmiri has since specialised in decorating the interior of the house-boat most artistically and making it most comfortable. Resembling Venetian gondolas, though larger in size, the house-boats can be punted and moored at any desired site. A *shikara* (a canopied small gondola, rowed with heart-shaped paddles) is attached to every house-boat like a 'water-taxi'. Vendors in *shikaras* glide up to the doorstep of the house-boat, a floating market of fruits, flowers, shawls, carpets, jewellery and handicrafts. An aquatic holiday—the lakes and canals also give the visitor glimpses of history, birdlife and unspoilt loveliness of exotic landscapes—in Kashmir is an unforgettable experience.

Once the visitor is in the Valley, and has had his fill of a house-boat vacation, it is customary to look for the exhilarating experience of visiting the mountain resorts, most of them within easy reach of Srinagar. Pahalgam (2,110 m above sea level) and Gulmarg (2,250 m) are within easy reach of Srinagar (1,650 m), which is the base for trips to these and other resorts like Sonamarg (2,595 m), Yusmarg and Lolab valley. Pahalgam, very popular with Indian tourists, is itself the base for treks to the Kolahai glacier, the snowbound cave of Amarnath, mountain-girt Sheshnag and other lakes; these and other destinations traversing

through some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.

### Year-round Resort

A poplar avenue (38 km) leads from Srinagar to Tangmarg through green and gold rice and mustard fields. After another 13 km through pine forests, there is Gulmarg (meadow of flowers)—'gul' is 'flowers' in Persian, and 'marg' is 'upland meadow'. The resort is not only known for its (18-hole) golf course (the highest in the world) but has been fast catching up as a ski-resort after the installation of a 500-m chair-lift to the 2-km ski-run. This has been supplemented by four sophisticated ski-lifts. There is a twenty-five room, centrally-heated, tourist bungalow besides luxury hotels with eighty rooms. In 1979, about 10,000 tourists, including 4,000 foreigners, visited Gulmarg. With this international attraction, Gulmarg has practically become a year-round resort, the summer and autumn seasons complemented by the emphasis on winter sports which continue until spring.

The Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering, started at Gulmarg by the Department of Tourism, Government of India, in 1969, is world-famous. The instructors it turns out assist skiers as well as mountaineers. The Institute also conducts water-ski courses in Nagin lake at Srinagar, during the summer months. Over and above the foreign tourist orientation, the Institute has an all-India bias. Among its objectives are building up interest in skiing, water skiing, mountaineering and trekking among Indian youth by offering them inexpensive courses. A centrally-heated tourist bungalow already caters to the increasing winter traffic.

Besides Gulmarg, tourist resorts like Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Kokarnag, Yusmarg, Aharbal, Daksu, Dal lake, Manasbal lake and their environs, Mansar and Patni Top (in Jammu province), have been further developed under a comprehensive programme, launched by the state government several years ago, and intensified recently. The main



thrust of the planned development was to stabilise and improve the facilities provided so far and to open new areas with a view to prolonging the stay of visitors, and to disperse them over a wider area of the state, instead of their being confined to the existing popular resorts of Srinagar, Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

The government of the state has been paying much attention to the provision of more accommodation—and other facilities—to tourists, foreign and domestic, not only at the resorts in Jammu and Kashmir provinces but also in remote Ladakh. Aided by the Union Government, the state government has been making concerted endeavours to develop Kashmir as an international resort, but these efforts have been offset for some time by continued terrorist activities since 1989-90.

Additional facilities are, however, being created at the tourist spot of Patni Top, with new huts, viewing decks, etc. Wayside facilities from Lakhampur to Srinagar were augmented. Efforts were made to diversify tourism. Rather than limiting it to Pahalgam, Gulmarg and Sonamarg, new areas like Bangus Nilnag lake and Aharbal in Kashmir, and Patni Top, Sanasar, Mantalai, Deragali, Bhadarwah, Billavar, Sarthan Devi, and Salal in Jammu, have been brought on the tourist map. Adventure tourism is a reality, with emphasis on skiing and heli-skiing, water sports and trekking. As part of providing cheap accommodation, *Yatrikas* and *Yatriniwas* were constructed at a number of places.

### Jammu Province

Jammu, the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir state, is the gateway to the Kashmir Valley. Jammu province may not be rich like the Valley with the bounties of nature but it offers, nevertheless, resorts of scenic beauty, hill treks, picnic spots, lakes and places of pilgrimage. Visitors flock to Jammu not only because it is the gateway to Kashmir but also because it is a tourism destination in its own right. The shrines of the province—especially Vaishno Devi—attract

large numbers of pilgrims from all over India, and even from abroad. In 1988, 19.92 lakh pilgrims visited the Vaishno Devi shrine, and the number reached 60 lakhs in 1997.

Jammu city itself (300 m above sea level) is beautifully situated between the outer hills bounding the Valley of Kashmir and the plains of the Punjab. The city has long been a centre of Indian pilgrimage and culture, renowned especially for the Pahari school of miniature painting which developed in this region. The towering citadels and spires of this unique 'city of temples', perched on a ridge, can be viewed from afar. Raghunath Mandir (Raghunath is for Lord Rama, and '*mandir*' means 'temple') is one of the biggest temple complexes of northern India. Though 130-years old, the complex is remarkable for sacred scriptures, one of the richest collection of ancient texts and manuscripts in its library. The main temple contains the image of Raghunath; other temples are devoted to gods of the Hindu pantheon, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, etc. The hub of Jammu's social and cultural activities, Raghunath Mandir, becomes crowded during the period of the pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi (63 km north of the city). There are many Raghunath temples in Jammu province as well as in Kishtwar and Ramban.

Worship of Shakti—a variant of the Mother Goddess, an embodiment in the Hindu idiom of the all-pervading power of the omnipotent Lord—is prevalent in all parts of Jammu province. Shakti shrines are seen dotting the rugged landscape. The best known of the Shakti shrines is the one called Vaishno Devi, which has the same place in Jammu as the Amarnath cave has in Kashmir. The rush of visitors is greatest during autumn, when the pilgrimage takes place. The state government took over the management of the shrine on 30 August 1986; it has taken a number of measures to meet the phenomenal increase in the number of pilgrims, averaging 8,000 a day even in summer.

Jammu is the railhead for Srinagar and is also connected by air and road (584 km) to Delhi and to Srinagar



(289 km). The Indian Tourism Development Corporation has a fifty-room hotel on top of a hill, overlooking the town and the Tawi valley, which caters to the growing number of tourists who visit the town or make it the base for treks or pilgrimages.

Flanked by the Tawi river flowing at its feet, Jammu is bounded towards the north by an amphitheatre of hills culminating in the three conical peaks of the sacred Trikuti hill, harbouring the Vaishno Devi cave-shrine. Just across the Tawi river, the hillock Jammu is crowned with the historic Bahu fort. Jammu, apart from these physical attractions, is the base for many trips and treks to *margs* and resorts. Situated on the river Chenab, gushing down the hills, is Akhnur, a picnic spot, 32 km from Jammu; the nearby heart-shaped Surinsar lake reflecting hillocks in its crystal blue water also attracts tourists. Rajouri (160 km from Jammu) is a summer resort.

There are a number of beautiful hill resorts situated on the winding, mountainous Jammu-Srinagar national highway, which are popular with domestic and foreign tourists: Kud (105.6 km), Patni Top (112 km), Batote (124.8 km) and Banihal (187 km). All these resorts have *dak* bungalows and other accommodation for tourists; Patni Top has a youth hostel. About 20 km from Patni Top, accessible via a motorable road, is the lovely meadow of Sanasar, where the water of the tarn in the midst of the greenery of the vast pastures presents an enchanting vista. The spring water of Sanasar is sweet and digestive. Batote has the potential of becoming a popular summer resort, apart from being the central place for treks in Bhadarwah and Kishtwar.

Situated in the mountain ranges are Bhadarwah and Kishtwar—rather remote summer resorts, about 208.4 km and 240 km, respectively, from Jammu, on the Batote-Bhadarwah road. Besides these, in recent years, a number of places with scenic splendour have been converted into tourist attractions. Among these, Patni Top, Surinsar, Mansar and Sanasar have become holiday resorts.

## Ladakh Province

One of the most elevated regions of the world, whose forbidding terrain is arid beyond relief, Ladakh—which used to be called 'Western Tibet' or 'Little Tibet'—has a peculiar fascination for Western tourists, who have started coming to this lofty land ever since it was reopened to traffic in 1974. Described as the 'roof of the world', Ladakh, where people live at heights ranging from 2,500 m to 4,500 m above the sea level, is no destination for people with weak hearts. Burning heat by day is succeeded by piercing cold by night. The pink granite of the sheer mountains, many of them snow-capped, contrasting with the deep blue sky, holds an exotic charm for the tourist, who can rough it, missing the comforts of luxurious hotels while trekking in this 'high desert country'.

The Indian Army has taken up a unique project to examine the usefulness of the *Amchi* system of medicine, found in Ladakh for treating problems like frostbite, pulmonary oedema and even psychiatric disorders faced by soldiers in high altitude areas.

The Amchi system of medicine is based on the Tibetan system which in turn is based on Ayurveda. *Amchis*, as the Ladakhi doctors are known, have been handing down their medical knowledge from father to son down the years. Recently, however, an Amchi College has been started in Ladakh for training and certification of Amchis.

Amchi is a well-developed system of medicine which treats the individual as a whole and remedies include mostly herbal extracts from plants which grow in the high altitude region of Ladakh. Some minerals and animal products are also used as remedies which treat a whole spectrum of physical and mental problems. Almost all the Amchi literature is in the Bodhi script and there is a strong Buddhist flavour to it.

The Indian Army project aims at identifying about twenty plants commonly used by the Amchis with the assistance of the Botanical Survey of India and then



examining them for their medicinal ingredients.

Brisk sunshine, fresh air and green river valleys, dotting the vast black mountainscape-like oases in a desert, greet the tourist. A visit to this Shangri-la is definitely a most unforgettable experience of one's lifetime. Ladakh is connected with Kashmir by a black-topped road, which traverses mountains and passes, and is open from May to November. Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is reached in two days by bus from Srinagar via the Srinagar-Leh Road. The curving mountainous road passes through Sonamarg, the Zojila pass (3,413 m) and the Drass valley (the coldest inhabited region in the world, after Siberia), culminating in a night's halt at Kargil. Leh (434 km from Srinagar) is reached on the second day. The Indian Airlines has since connected Srinagar with Leh, opening Ladakh to air tourism, a measure that boosted the international traffic.

Some of the oldest monasteries are to be found near the road. The monasteries are one of the main attractions of Leh. The biggest monastery in Ladakh is situated at Hemis, 40 km from Leh, along a road crossing the Indus. Among the innumerable *tankhas* (paintings on cloth), there is one which is supposed to be the biggest of its kind in existence. The exposition of this *tankhas* takes place once in eleven years. Every year, in June, a fair ('Mela of Hemis Gompa') takes place at Hemis which is a colourful occasion for the mask dances. Other *gompas* (monasteries) are at Tiksey, Sunker, Spitak, Fiang-Alchi, etc. The Lama Yaru monastery is situated at a high altitude and is reached immediately after crossing the highest point of Srinagar-Leh motor road. In the vicinity are interesting cave-dwellings carved out in the mountainside.

The zealous mountaineer, eager to explore this Shangri-la of the east, can hire tents, camp gear, kitchen accessories, as well as bearers and guides, at Srinagar. Accommodation and other facilities at Leh, Kargil and other places, so far limited, are being expanded. The tourists are taking it easy, and most of all, the Ladakhis are a source of delight to them.

As a European tourist puts it, Ladakh is "one of the few wonderful spots where the people leave you alone and that in itself makes a holiday worthwhile." One Californian tourist who was taken up by the sight of Ladakhis dancing in the streets remarked that in Ladakh, "one steps into the middle ages and therein lies its charm".

Tourism has emerged as one of the major industries of the state and on it depends largely the growth of its economy. About one-sixth of the total labour force in the state owes its employment to tourism, directly or indirectly. The government has kept tourism in the priority sector of the state. Since leisure tourism has its assured clientele, a new thrust has been given to the industry by special attention being accorded to adventure tourism.

The introduction of a new adventure sport, called heli-skiing, in 1987-88, added a new dimension to the winter tourism of the state. Heli-skiing consists of being dropped by a helicopter on the summit of a high, snow-covered peak, and then skiing down the slopes. The helicopter transports skiers from the base (Gulmarg) to heights of over 4,500 m, landing on a different peak every day, whether it is Apharwat, Yusmarg or the Kolahai glacier. Kashmir—there is already a well-organised Central Gulmarg Ski Institute conducting ski courses and competitions—became the second place in the world, after Canada, to offer large-scale heli-skiing. The construction of a 7.5 km-long gondola cable car ropeway from Gulmarg to Apharwat, which began in April 1988, has also contributed to Kashmir becoming a year-round destination.



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Regarded by the Mughals as 'the earthly paradise', Kashmir has held a particular fascination for many. Since time immemorial, tourists as well as pilgrims belonging to different regions have been attracted to this land of scenic splendour, bracing climate and sacred shrines. The present book is about this land and its handsome people noted for their tolerance, intelligence, industry and skill. It describes Kashmir's rich contribution to the fabric of Indian life—its art, literature and culture.

Somnath Dhar, after serving on the staff of S.P. College, Srinagar, worked with the Ministry of External Affairs, in New Delhi and abroad. He is the author of *Kashmir: Eden of the East*, *Kashmir in Stories*, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir*, *Tales of Kashmir*, *Folk-Tales of Turkey*, and *Kalhana*. His book, *Historical Tales of Kashmir* (1984) was followed by *Nepal: Land of Gods, Goddesses and Demons*, which he co-authored with his wife, Asha (1985). *Jammu and Kashmir Folklore* (1986) won him two awards, one in 1988 and the other in 1989. As a historian and folklorist, he has presented papers at national and international conferences.



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